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T H E
R E L I G I O U S
C O N T E M P L A T O R .

— Who seeks
To lessen Thee, against his purpose serves
To manifest the more Thy might: his evil
Thou usest, and from thence creat'st more good.
Witness this new made world, another heav'n!

— Whereon,
In CONTEMPLATION of created things,
By steps we may ascend to God —
PAR. LOST.



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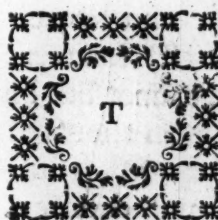


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T H E
P R E F A C E
T O T H E
R E A D E R.



THE following pages make a portion of a large *Manuscript*, the Author hath kept by him many years---But this part of it, being a sort of luxuriant shoot, not necessarily connected with the main body, but may be slipped off from it; when thus transplanted, he hopes will itself take root kindly and flourishing, and stand an object somewhat conspicuous, and not unuseful and displeasing, amidst the variety in the modern crowded wilderness, of tasteful Fancy's easy and elegant designing. As a detached and entire piece therefore, not affecting the truth or impairing the plan of the whole, in any material degree, he is disposed to communicate it to the public—This then he hopes will excuse, for the abrupt manner, and perhaps consequent obscurity, that here appears, of beginning the present discourse.

THE chief subject of the whole, tho' strictly religious, he is very sorry to find is but ill suited to the present period: And indeed this short extract, is likewise of so peculiar and unpopular a nature, being religious too, as makes him doubtful even of its acceptance---He is therefore very unwilling to ex-

pose his all at once, to so great hazard in such an unkindly season, like a rash and too bold adventurer---Neither is he so happily situated, as renders him capable of procuring well-assured advice, whether or not this is likely as it is, to prove a merchantable commodity ; or proper assistance to make it more likely---For (oh ! shocking thought indeed,) as it happens to be on a topic by no means adapted to the genius of the times, and please the modish *Gusto* of our vast effeminate tribe of *Romance Hunters*, and those whimsical, ludicrous compositions, (the large, spurious progeny of prolific and licentious imaginations) calculated (at the best) for mere amusement and dissipation ; he therefore cannot but be extremely sensible, he ought rather to ask ten thousand pardons, no doubt, for so intolerably rude and dreadful an intrusion upon their patience and delicacy. For *Contemplation* and High-Life, (which to say the truth, is *life* inverted and refined, *i. e.* fined down to Low-Life) unluckily are not consistent together ; tho' if genuine, would be the faithful friends and supports of each other---Neither yet, I can tell you, must the class of consummate *literati*, expect here to sit down to a rich repast, heightened to the relish of their over-nice palates : For sound and wholesome morals, are a dainty fare alone, to all but the *infidel* Epicure.

THESE things considered in sober sadness, tho' bearing an aspect so vastly unpromising, yet is not all hope in the humble author entirely dissipated, of meeting with some such ill-bred, simple *thinking Creatures* as himself, at least amongst the vulgar, the antiquated and impertinent set of reasoners ; some well-disposed readers surely there still are left, who will mercifully attend more to the important matter of its contents, than the homely manner of its conveyance.

The P R E F A C E.

v

veyance. For here is that treated on, which requires more the simplicity of an honest and good heart, with a little share of ingenuity and judgment to approve of, rather than the brilliancy and depths of the mental talents. And therefore tho' he is really sensible of his own inabilities to appear, either as an inventive, eloquent, or learned writer, and may rather expect to find some such full of laughter at, or else even frowning upon dulness, here perfectly confounded (say they) and lost in the interminable wilds and mazes of *Hypothesis*: Yet the most valuable plain truth and religious knowledge, which need not any artful embellishments to charm, being his objects, and not empty delusive fame with all her blandishments; he is willing to venture this feeble effort abroad, purely relying on its usefulness (desiring to inculcate practical morals and not vague speculation only) for candid and indulgent favour, from the truly worthy part of brother *Christians*, and to be happy in some little share of *their* esteem. And as it is his endeavour to develop a very abstruse subject, and set it in a fair, natural and striking view, if it should seem prolix, desultory and tiresome to some, others may approve the more the true pains bestowed, which is apt to raise up in the mind new and useful thoughts; and since what is obtained by feverish experience, and hath stood the test of its minutest scrutiny, is thereby rendered in itself most substantial and satisfactory. All the favour he asks of Contemners then is, that after the very first peep, *they* will close the book and put it down; greatly hoping no harm is done at last, no offence given, nor is the least intended *them*.

INDEED it is a melancholy reflection and even astonishing to think, that so many very rational and learned treatises, in display of our most holy religion,

ligion, as have of late years appeared, and written by persons of different ranks and professions in life, and all with such an excellent spirit, solid and powerful argument and most engaging address, should yet be attended with so very little, so confined an influence---On the contrary, it is a perfect shame to see, what a most wretched notion and perception the puritanical and even enthusiastic *moralists* still have, of the noble and generous (see *John VIII. 32. 36.*) theory and efficacy of *Christianity*: And whilst amongst abandoned libertines, almost any sort of Trash of a vile and dangerous tendency, is eagerly sought after and joyously received, by the crouds of both high and low, the *great* and *small* vulgar. But what fair excuse can be made for these people? In this *protestant* country, where free enquiry is recommended by every sensible ingenious man; can there be truth in what some have lately said, by way of tender apology and complaisance? *viz.* That they "have not been so happy, even after an *honest* enquiry, as to see *fully* the evidences of the "Christian Religion itself." I fear this is but *vile and impossible* to be said of any, be they ever so *few perhaps in number*. I doubt, genuine "*religious liberty*," is not all such gentlemen want. That they want discerning abilities, many of their literary works fully testify against them. They want sincerity and earnestness, in their search after sacred truth: It is but the same only much greater in degree, now, as our Saviour pronounced it to be then; all hypocrisy and white-wash. And did not the *foolishness of preaching* prevail directly *against* the wisdom of the sages, at a time the world was advanced to the highest renown for natural knowledge and learning? how much to the disgrace then, of Mans pretending to be wise overmuch. And would to God this were
rightly

rightly considered, at these vaunting times for improvements in science, and wisdom falsely so called. The requisite *faith* for Salvation, proposed in the Scriptures, is void of all *mystery*, obscurity, and every degree of difficulty. And let these persons seriously consider, that not the least allowance is there made, for even the *more allowable* strong prejudices of the Jews or afterwards of the Gentiles, let a *crucified Saviour* be to the former ever such a stumbling-block, or to the latter the greatest foolishness. For the conditions of acceptance hereafter, at the same time that they are peremptory and indispensable, so they are exceeding plain, easy and reasonable: And therefore their gladly embracing the *Christian* scheme as soon as contemplated, can no how else be prevented, than thro' pride and pertinacious obstinacy. It is an insolent and obdurate state of mind alone, that can cause them to reject the all-bountiful and infinitely gracious overtures, of the blessed *Gospel of reconciliation and Peace*, and its most benevolent and endearing theory of religion --- I cannot but think, that the evidences for the truth of divine revelation and the *Christian* religion, are absolutely irresistible, to any intelligent, honest and humble enquirer; to a mind unprejudiced and open to conviction, endowed with a common share of discernment. Is not a *believing* Jew and Gentile in the apostolick age then, the deepest reproach to a pretended *reasoning* moralist in the present? And think then, Oh! vain creature! for pity think! That if the righteous attain unto salvation through hard trial and with steady perseverance, where shall not only the wilful sinner but even the ungodly appear, before his Maker's dread tribunal, in the illustrious Day of retribution and inexorable vengeance! It is purely of themselves, if they neglect so great
salvation

salvation offered them ! And therefore to meekness let them add heavenly wisdom, to innocence usefulness, be profitable servants, do good, and bring forth proper fruits to God and their Neighbour ; or else an infinitely fatal neglect they will find it to be. And let them at present look out, for whatever shelter their vain hopes and flattering imaginations, may availingly suggest to their deceitful hearts, all will most assuredly be found utterly insufficient to preserve them, against the fiery indignation of the Almighty Majesty, and to hide the hypocrite from the heart-searching God, who hath sworn that without holiness no man shall see him ! (*Heb. X. 23. 31.*)

THAT as the world in general becomes more enlightened, any should wilfully choose to be farther immersed in gross malignant darkness, enslaved and blinded by their own foolish prejudices and passions ; that even the huge multitude are still plunging deeper into debauchery and excess of wickedness, whilst some few individuals are more exemplarily virtuous and good : (For tho' upon the whole *knowledge* does doubtless, but secretly encrease, yet that the vast majority should thus equally advance, very perceptibly, in corruption : I say, this wide difference in the minds and tempers of reasoners, indicates a strange and almost unaccountable bias and depravity inherent therein, and their respective mental powers to be implanted by the immediate will of God ; as much as the difference of advantage in our situations on this earth, is by his appointment. And all seems to shew, as if a certain ballance and proportion between *virtue* and *vice* in the world, were mechanically preserved by providence, according to a stated law in nature and the mysterious fitness of things ; by necessarily adjusting thus the improving *qualities* of the one sort of persons, the *few* to the encreasing numbers

numbers of the other, the *many*: during the course of this probation-state. The former resembling a strong and good blade of corn, spiring up through the midst of a large bed of rank weeds, which grows on flourishing to the greater perfection, by the benefit of their refreshing shade and moisture at its roots. So that as the gloomy number of the wicked encreases, the light of The Gospel may thereby shine the brighter at the same time, the deeper blackness of the Foil adding to the lustre of the sparkling Brilliant; and the fundamentals of true *Christianity* are the better understood, thro' the multiplied opposition of sceptical wranglers; and thus the world, by the wonderful permission of an all-wise and good God, is evidently getting both better and worse continually in these its widely differing members. (*Matt. XXIV. 12.*)

The deplorable height to which ambition and covetousness, "the lust of the eye and pride of life," (those two grand adversaries, the first-born of Satan, in every nation, combined against *Protestantism* and all true principle of religious liberty; as in some, idolatry and persecution are the grand *abomination* in league against *Christianity* in general,) are arisen and even practised systematically, in every branch of what is commonly but impiously called *Business*.--- Oh! that it were well considered by all ranks and orders of men, that thus *all joy, through hope* of the inconceivably precious promises of an eternity, are utterly blasted and cut off: Since worldly riches and honours unmerited, are fatally weighty in balance *against the weight of glory hereafter*; and therefore, are *altogether really lighter than vanity and nothing*.---

BUT indeed the numberless evils that still continue in the world, both moral and natural dependent on each other, are truly surprizing--That tra-

ducible obliquity of the soul, its infantile proneness to immorality and vice, prior to the exercise of its rational faculties, or capacity to discern between right and wrong.* And in After-life, that fancied, forlorn, neglected and solitary condition of the world, which is so irksome to the lazy Voluptuary, and even very grievous to every wilful and hardened *Desparado*; instead of producing that timely recourse to religion, *and using all diligence to make their calling and election sure*, reverence to divine Revelation, and steadfast assiance in the God of Nature and his gracious Providence, with devout patience, as it infallibly ought; that this should on the contrary, drive so many preposterously to seek for temporary relief, in base, dishonourable and flagitious practices, like one delirious in a fever, by cold water, making bad worse:--The reason of such anomalous appearances and surprizing Phenomena in the moral world, I say, were then very well deserving the main study and meditation, of every serious person, solicitous of being accounted a worthy creature by his God and Fellow-mortals. For when once the latent cause of the disorder is perceived, there may be hopes in due time, by the application and use of those proper medicines it serves to indicate to us, at least greatly to sooth if not quite remove and cure, all uneasiness under it.--The present Tract then is no farther valuable

* For since we find such a secret and mysterious connection and dependence between our souls and bodies, there must necessarily be derived from parents to children and sometimes continued thro' many generations, the same resemblance in the cast, frame and temper &c. of the former, as of the complexion, form and gestures, &c. of the latter; and very frequently of this we see instances, to such a most unaccountable minuteness, as would expose one to the charge of superstition but to recount them--

luable, than as it may be esteemed a just account, of a dormant and obscure tho' very interesting Truth, of the greatest consequence to universal satisfaction, and conducive to the peace and tranquillity of the dubious or alarmed mind, and so may be productive of perfect submission and obedience to the will and pleasure of God. Whether such a salutary *Nostrum* is here really administered, experience will shew: And tho' it is old and grown almost obsolete, there are certainly most excellent ingredients in it, that should serve to restore it to common practice again. For Truth and Knowledge will always prove a strengthening and invigorating balsam to the weak soul.

THE author hath never seen any professed treatise on the subject, till some years after by far the greatest part of this was penned*. And that met with such a severe repulse, as still encreases his doubt about this attempt by a weaker hand. But give him leave fairly to acknowledge, that he does by no means set up for a complete master of the subject, but a willing humble servant, to all who will condescend hereby to receive him as such. And tho' his diction be coarse, thinks he has not quite failed to say, some good and affecting if not new things, and enforced some useful observations in this highly momentous concernment----

WE all feel a very active and inquisitive Principle within, which will not rest satisfied, till in these matters of the most interesting and engaging nature, it can arrive at what seems the nearest to demonstration possible. Hence no doubt it is, that the Opinion now contended for, hath (it seems) in different periods of the world, been generally espoused, as preferable to all others discoverable by human penetration.

* Mr. BERROW'S *Pre-existent Lapse*.

netration. Its antiquity therefore ought to weigh much in favour of it, added to the universal prevalence of this notion; and which together seem to indicate, as if it were ushered into the world, by the pure dictates of natural reason, at least; and would have been perfectly confirmed past all doubt, had the same principles not been perverted, by the prejudice, pride, and subtlety of the infidel Sophists. But I will venture to recommend it to acceptance again, merely on account of its serviceableness; all which must plead strongly for its probability, against all objections but impossibility itself, which can never be averred. And when one considers, that in all time past, not scarce a shadow of a real argument hath been advanced against *this*, which nothing less than absolute demonstration can possibly serve to subvert, and dispel from the contemplative mind; it is unaccountably strange to see very ingenious and deservedly venerated (but inconsistent) Critics, so determined to oppugn, and presume so peremptorily and magisterially to discountenance it. But nature, reason and experience, will be found very powerful advocates in all cases, and *here* have no *reality* to conflict with; nor yet *any thing* "founded on imagination," or *so much* as the most violently "precarious reasonings." Can this then be "justly given up in the present age"? I cannot think it deserves to be exploded so much, as the ten thousand uninteresting, airy and doubtful disquisitions of mere Moralists, Metaphysicians, Antiquarians, and Critics, too often betraying a very blame-worthy misapplication of great talents, displayed in ever so great parade, ostentatious and solemn sound of words, and however applauded by partial and even enraptured admirers. In this case, the horrible blackness of darkness and uncertainty
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in which this enquiry is involved, must for ever remain, if this bright ray of divine reason is wilfully resisted. When on the contrary it is thoroughly admitted, and this Opinion once lays hold fairly on the unprejudiced mind, it can never be forsaken, but will be embraced with alacrity, as highly plausible in itself, and standing single without one competitor; and the mind finding this the only complete source of comfort and satisfaction, in so pressing and necessitous an occasion, will steadily adhere thereto. For like infinite other propositions, in themselves the most essential too, this carries its own evidence with it, and therefore needed not to be more plainly and positively *revealed* than it is—

IF some other *Articles of Faith*, which have been with great fury and virulence stickled for, had had as much to plead as the following doctrine has, either in regard to utility, necessity and perspicuity, no rational man would have stood astonished as now, to find them universally received---But to consider, that absolutely against the undeniable demonstration of nature, the possibility of things, and entire system of Revelation, and to the utter demolition of the very ground-work itself of the divine scheme of Religion; some propositions have been advanced and venerated, as essential to *salvation*, for centuries past, and even to this very enlightened age too much whilst this is contemptuously rejected, tho' really void of all such objections, but certainly hath much which most nearly concerns us, to recommend it to our reception; can only be accounted for by the bigotry and superstition of Religionists, and the fastidiousness and negligence of Infidels; in short, the pride and craftiness of a wicked world—The two dangerous extremes of *Infidelity* and *Enthusiasm*

fiatism, having almost entirely eclipsed and enveloped, all visible *practice* (at least) of *Christianity* in its genuine purity and most lovely simplicity, as it is to be found delivered in the book of God, adapted to the ignorance, weakness and frailty of lapsed Man. As the one has *reasoned* it to *no Thing*, so has the other made an *unreasonable Thing* of it, and with great absurdity, folly and falshood on both sides. But if they could be persuaded by the prevalence of their own unbiased reason and judgment, to substitute or acquiesce in this extensively illustrating, influencing and regulating sentiment, here offered to calm meditation with great deference and due submission, in the place of *imposed Mysticism*; (beyond bounds, without end, pestiferous!) it would most assuredly be, a great improvement on the score of Religion in general.—The closing in with this fruitful and exhilarating doctrine, which all experience and knowledge seem to confirm, would mainly “contribute to *unload the world of a multitude of useless and insignificant writings*,” the frothy and vague produce of stubborn and conceited human wisdom. This, which so far from confounding or reproaching the established order and constitution of things, in both the moral and physical world, does at least much illustrate the œconomy of God’s divine laws, and greatly magnify in our ideas, the wonderful dispensations of his indulgent providence: And therefore, tho’ “the Cause of our holy religion doth not rest upon” the success of this argument, “and that it is capable of being defended by much better weapons;” yet am I still two much afraid, that instead of choosing this and rejecting that, for our defence, in the uncertain events of this day of battle, we ought to be quite *complete* in the whole armour of God, and, as hitherto, *all* will be
yet

yet little enough to vanquish this fell, insidious foe, this Hydra of *Infidelity*, and give him a mortal stab——

THE author is fond of a retired and contemplative life, for the most part, the happy effects of which to himself have been considerable, as he thinks he has it to shew: And if it should now or ever prove at all so to the world, it will crown his pious joy. Indeed the author is cut out for almost no other kind of life, tho' he hath thought it a duty he owed to his King and Country, to have for some time acted in a public character. And how he has acquitted himself in this his retirement, which is most natural and adapted to his particular constitution and abilities, must be left to others to judge of by this small Specimen of its productions—May it therefore venture forth and prosper, by being (unexpectedly) found worthy of general acceptance, is the earnest desire of a very sincere friend to Mankind. “The more danger, the more honour;” (says the old adage) and the greater need, the more speed; let him presume to add to it, who has at heart very much the peace and happiness of all. And therefore hath charitably devoted to the use of others who need such help, the present Publication, it being the result of his long and diligent enquiry, by which he hath sufficiently procured them to himself: And tho' being the work of a *Layman* it may be a little out of character, is too well assured the ministrations of a Friend can never be unseasonable——

THE
R E L I G I O U S
C O N T E M P L A T O R .

C H A P. I.

“ *Not for that we have Dominion over your Faith,
“ but are Helpers of your Joy.*” 2 COR. I. 24.

S E C T. I.

I Shall here endeavour modestly to propose and illustrate such a *Supposition*, concerning the divinely wise Procedure of *The everlasting Father of the Universe*, in his amazing Polity over this World ; as may best serve to give us a just and sublime Comprehension, of his wonderful Dispensations and adorable Providence towards Mankind, and even all his Creatures, (which in the confessed Progress of Religion and Knowledge, during the present State of Things, have been, still are, and must ever continue, constantly opening to our enlarged Capacity for Contemplation, and visibly enough tending more and more to the utmost perfecting of our Nature ;) and as is therefore very easily reconcilable, to his most Holy Word and Attributes. — Like as the Works of the Almighty Architect and Glorious Creator, so are the Ordinations of the wise Law-giver and wonderful Controuler of Events, drawn out and lengthened we see, by one uniform Scale and Gradation *ad infinitum*. We easily trace out a Connection and Relation of one Part to another ; are charmed with that Seraphic Harmony, in which all is united, composed and directed. As there are no Redundancies or Duplicates in the whole material System, so neither can any Imperfections, Deformities or Flaws be discovered in the Spiritual one. All Nature, is complete Order and accomplished Beauty, in both the Physical and Moral Parts of it, the Operations of his Hands and Direction of Human Affairs. His entire Plan of divine Government, we may thus plainly perceive, bears near Resemblance, to that Concatenation and Chain of Beings in the material Part of it, rising one over the other from the lowest

to the highest Order, without any Chasm; there being some connecting Link between those of a different Nature, (as Quicksilver for Instance, to carry on the Scale from one to the other, between Fluids and Solids; and such like: Or more eminently, the Polypus, to connect vegetable and animal Life :) * So likewise does the Manner of His Spiritual Presidence seem to run parallel therewith; tending to raise the whole from the lowest Debasement, to the highest Degrees of Beatification in Eternity. The State *intermediate*, upon Death, being like the ascending Golden Link of *Rest*, between the Powers of Evil, "or the *Labours*" in this transitory Life, and the actual *vital* Joys of the Millennium; and which will still elevate us to those endless *Inconceivables*, the super-excellent Bliss of Heaven itself, without any the least Chasm or Discontinuance.

The Mention made in the *Apocalypse*, of the False Prophet, &c. (which in the general Acceptation, may there be understood of the Body of the Wicked) rising up from the Bottomless-pit; does not only, not a little countenance this Doctrine, as it supposes them to have arisen and emerged into *this* State of *Probation*, in order to be still advanced in Happiness: But furthermore, from this plain Hint in these Places, and the Conceptions that will hence be apt to arise in our busy Minds, we can scarcely help forming Conjectures as to our *Prior-state*, estimating the Fact in itself at a Certainty; and thus the Supposition of Mankind being *Fallen-Angels*, might take its Origen amongst the rest. (See a Pamphlet lately published, † entitled *A Rhapsody of Free Thoughts*, P. II. Sect. I.) — It seems to receive some glimmering of Light too, from St. *Jude*, (ver. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,) for the introducing this dark and hidden Mystery, the Case of the *Fallen-Angels*, has but little or no Connection with that of his main Subject, to favour its Use and need of any Notice there: Unless we suppose he is drawing the Parallel, with a View to support this Doctrine of it; and in such a Light, 'tis very intelligible and proper. — So does St. *Peter*, on the same Subject, seem to deduce the Parallel too far back, (*viz.* from the *Fallen-Angels* to Mankind in the present State, by such

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* For of which it partakes the most is hard to determine, being plainly nothing but a hollow Tube, void of Vessels and Organs of Digestion, and Respiration, &c. tho' it so greedily sucks in and devours large Worms.

a regular Gradation, and in as plain and consequential a Way of Reasoning, as can be expected) for one that intended only to intimate as much to us, and not *plainly* to tell us it was really so. For it had been fully sufficient to every other designed Purpose, to have taken up this Relation, at that concerning the Old World, in Verse 5, instead of carrying us back to Things prior to its very Existence, (*Vid.* 2d Epist. Chap. II.) But yet I do not mean to advance these Portions of Scripture, with Intent to shew, that I am entirely persuaded this is an *unavoidable* Consequence, or Conclusion, *positively* founded in them rightly understood, or fully authorized by them. Tho' I know not wherein it is prejudicial to any other of its evident Doctrines or Precepts, and therefore, I hope, is no way injurious to the true and sound Faith of a good Christian, and orthodox Divinity. Neither by espousing this Belief, do I think myself at all chargeable with a Breach of that Care and Precaution, that every Student of Holy Writ should be Master of, that he may not be too easily prompted to form *unwarrantable* Hypotheses, from a too luxuriant and unreserved Fancy. For I hope there may be no harm in such Conceits, as are not contradictory to Scripture Doctrines, and repugnant or detrimental to its plain Precepts, nor Reason and the Analogy of Nature. Nay, that one may suppose one sees some inspired Expressions, which plainly suggest, if not necessarily imply them, as directly contributive to their own Explanation, Confirmation and Advantage; and especially too, if in such Matters as may be of great Use, to pacify and quiet the well-employ'd and inquisitive Mind, in many abstruse and intricate Positions, founded on the regular Deductions of Reason drawn from, or plainly to be found asserted in the Word of GOD; which I think, is the direct Tendency and in the Power of this Notion to effect. — For what certainly, still adds much to the Probability of this surprizing and useful Discovery is, that the Prophecy of the State and Condition of the Church, in the *World*, in all *future* Times, is figured out by Images, Emblems and Allusions, relative to the State and Condition of Apostate Angels in *Heaven*, prior to all Time; (in *Rev.* Chap. XII.) bearing Respect to both, and with seeming Equality. — Which manifestly intimates so close a Relation and Affinity, between the Rebellion and Apostacy amongst pure Spirits and of degraded Mortals, as serves not a little to countenance the Belief here offered. And does not this give a justness and Propriety, to the metaphorical Description of the vast and wonderful

Contents of this Chapter, very emphatical and moving; as if intended, by way of, only connecting the distant Parts, of this but one and the same Narrative, of this dismal Tale! into one Point of View? More particularly consider Ver. 9. (compare *John* VI. 70.) Neither, when maturely considered, is this so very uncouth and offensive a Sentiment, as at first Glance it may have seemed: And which may possibly be a Reason, why it is permitted to be only covertly and obscurely hinted at, and not expressly revealed and explicitly unfolded. That (like others the numberless Delicacies and exquisite *Minutiae* of the Sacred Books, in Things not absolutely necessary for us to know) it may yet serve for a laudable Enquiry and Subject of Speculation, and useful Employment of our reasoning Powers

THE curious Author of the Pamphlet just referred to, advances some Theses very interesting and engaging, in a new and surprizing Light, to me at least. Such as strike ones Apprehension with the entire Novelty of them, but this mostly affected me; and I own, the more I think about it since then, the more I seem to recede from Doubt; inasmuch as I dare not be positive, (so consonant and agreeable is it, to the present Nature and Order of Things, and improving to our own Ideas,) but ones Mind may almost be said to have been prepossessed of it, as if conceived from the First, but which had not its imaginary Birth, or emerged into intellectual Light, till now by Means of this administered Aid and assisting Hand; as we are no ways conscious of the Truth of the Fact, any more than of the Days whilst in our Mother's Womb: — Many very useful Documents and Lessons, may be drawn from this Proposition; some of which if it is not too tedious, I will crave Patience of my Readers to attend to. — And first, let me again repeat, as it is so needful, with plainness and perspicuity, to premise, that I see not any needful Article of Faith, or Tenet of the Christian Religion, that will be affected or prejudiced by it, I hope. And then Mankind considered as Part of the *Fallen-Angels*, will afford us these very helpful Admonitions and useful Reflections, easily flowing from it on one Side; if it does not, as I imagine, shipwreck any Part of our holy Professions in Religion, on the other at the same Time. — It instantly gives one a most admirable Perception and feeling of God's infinite Love and Mercy, his most consummate *Benignity*, in our Redemption! A new and capacious Field of Wonder and Delight, is here widely extended to our enraptured Imagination, from earnest Meditation on this inexhaustible

haustible Fountain, ever flowing from the Throne of God ; in placing such sad rebellious Subjects in a tolerably comfortable State of Probation, and in endowing them with Faculties and Powers, capable to regain his utterly forfeited Favours. — That notwithstanding their old and strong Attachment to, and even openly joining yet again with, the grand princely Adversary of his dear Son Christ Jesus, that God the Father, should still employ and send this very Person ; no less than his own dearly beloved and beloved Son of his own Bosom ; by whom they have been once repulsed and banished ; to be clothed with our ignominious Rags of Mortality ; into this our very Place of Exile, there Himself to suffer the most cruel Example of our *Curse* and Doom, in his newly accepted Nature, entailed upon it for Sin ; and by the Hands of whom ? Even these his formerly routed Enemies ! That he still persists, thro' all these repeated blasphemous Affronts, to invite us most tenderly to be reinstated from our prodigious Back-slidings, into our otherwise lost and irrecoverable Felicity again ; and by so easy a Compliance, even with the Observance of *Laws*, the pure and genuine Issues of boundless Pity and divine Placability, inconceivable Condescension and infinite Wisdom, being so divinely constituted, as makes them all along conduce to our present temporal Welfare and Peace, working this together with our everlasting Bliss and Glory ! The infinitely wise, good and benign Author of Life, having inseparably conjoined our Pleasure and Profit, Happiness and Interest, with our Duty. — So exquisitely well adapted are they to the Fitness and State of Things, and proportioned to the Reason and Nature of Mankind, as to create a perfect Consistency and Harmony thro' the Whole ! And which do powerfully recommend themselves by these wholesome and excellent Qualities to our unprejudic'd Judgment. And likewise God hath promised quite to forget and forgive, and from Time to Time, to renew his Holy Communion with our Spirits, on Condition of our faithful Performance of that gracious Law of *Repentance* and consequent *Obedience*, which he hath established to balance the Frailties of our Mortal Nature.

Thus doth the Almighty Father, by his blessed Son, “ draw all Men unto him ” with the silken Cords of his sweet and strongly inviting Love and Grace. A devout and due Sense of all this, must fill us with exalted Acclamations, at the *Goodness* of an omnipotent God, towards such vile Beings ! And think nothing in our Power too much to do, for so great a Conqueror, so gracious a Redeemer, and glorious

a King, as his most blessed Son! The Man CHRIST JESUS! We may well break forth with the *Psalmist*, in the utmost Degree of devout Surprise, deeply affected with most bitter Remorse, Anguish, and Compunction of Soul, " Lord, " what is (or indeed what has been,) Man, that thou " shouldst be (yet) thus mindful of him! Or the Son of " Man, that thou shouldst (at all) regard him! " For surely his Heart for hardness, exceeds all Description. This amazing and boundless Phylanthropy of the Son, in his Condescension to interest himself so effectually, for the Recovery of such worthless Wretches; may well be a Subject of the highest Entertainment, and truly worthy of the eternal Desire of the most exalted Spirits, to look into and contemplate with Adoration! " For greater Love hath no " Man, than that he lay down his Life for his Friend. " But he hath far out done all, by dying for us whilst we were vile and undeserving *Sinners*. And how have we in any sort, merited this wonderful Friendship; from what Original, is derived the great Cognation and Affinity: " This Fellowship of the Mystery! which from the Foundation of " the World hath been hid in God, who created all Things " by Jesus Christ, and of whom the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named. — Such are the unsearchable Riches of Christ! " (*Eph. III. 8, 9, 15*. See this and preceeding Chap.) " For both he that sanctifieth, and " they who are sanctified, are all of one; for which Cause " he is not ashamed to call them Brethren. " (*Heb. II. 11*.) That the Conditions of Peace, are now in this present State and Day of Grace offered to us for the very last Time; (*2 Cor. VI. 2*.) we must now choose Peace or War, the glorious Liberty and Privileges of the Sons of God; or everlasting Chains of Misery, with Satan and his Angels; a Coalition with the Almighty, or the Prince of Darkness, *for ever*! This being the last and best Expedient that divine Complacency could propose for us; and to which we do well to take the greatest Heed, as the dernier Resort of helpless, desponding Souls! *The forelorn Hope* of the persisting Wicked and Ungodly! This cannot but be supposed, since none less than this " Prince of Peace, " could now be a sufficient Sacrifice, to take away the vast Load of Guilt, under which this World is, (discernably even to Mortal Eyes) so sadly pressed down and overburthened. And therefore, from the Nature of Things, we must imagine, he hath wrought this great Redemption for us, when in our *very last* probationary Period; and whilst possible that we can be saved at any Rate, in Consistency with the

the glorious Attributes of God. — And therefore, that so short a Time too, as this Life, should restore us to a Capacity, nay, a Possibility of Salvation; yea, even to an incensed God's perfect and everlasting *Reconciliation*, thro' Christ the Saviour's Merits; * deserves our continual ardent Thanks, in Terms the most expressive, that inflamed Hearts overflowing with abundant Gratitude, can possibly conceive! For it engagingly displays, the exuberant *Bounty*, infinite *Benignity*, and perfect *Goodness* of God, as his most amiable Attributes; ineffable, majestic, and well worthy the Supreme, who made all Beings purely for Happiness and Bliss. — That whatever Sufferings and Trials, God pleases to afflict each of us with in this Life, may be more or less, perhaps, in Proportion to our former Disobedience and Offences. This Notion seems to bid fair, to account for most of the Difficulties, and seeming Inconsistencies we are too apt

* From whence it seems to appear on this Hypothesis, that it is not the *Length* and *Term* of this Life of Probation, but the infinite *Nature* and *Degree* of Sin in itself, that in the *eternal Mind*, makes the just Proportion, betwixt *temporal* Evil and Good, and *everlasting* Misery or Happiness. — The Justice in decreeing infinite Misery for finite Crimes, consists then, in the natural Turpitude, Deformity and Malignity, that there is in Sin; the which, of how great Depth and Profundity it may appear in the Sight of God, (especially too, when opposed to so easy and in itself eligible a Duty here, so wilfully and pertinaciously rejected for it,) we are not in the least qualified to judge. For if the Light that is in us be Darkness, "how great is that Darkness!" Neither hath it entered into our Hearts to conceive, the vast Sublimity and glorious Tendency, of the spiritual Essence and endless Nature of *Virtue* and *Holiness*. "For who shall separate us from the Love of Christ? Nay, we are more than Conquerors thro' Him that loved us!" Who can possibly apprehend at what a Distance, a continued Progress, once begun in wilful Sin and Pollution, must necessarily carry so excellent a Being as Man is, from the great Original of Truth and Purity; or, on the other Hand, to what wonderful Elevation in the World of Spirits, and Nearness in the mysterious Union with the Deity, which from the Beginning of the World hath been hid in God; an afflicted and resigned Creature *here*, by the proper Use of his Reason, may *hereafter*, be blessed with a Capacity of approaching, (1 *John* III. 1, 2.) Oh! the Depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom and "Knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out!" Thus the just Relation between the Nature of the Offence committed, and Punishment announced, the Obedience and Reward, merely; will in this very important Matter, clearly "justify the Ways of God to Man." The Disproportion that gives the Disgust, *viz.* between Time and Eternity in this and the next States, is quite another Object, and a distinct Part of this interesting Subject, tho' they are too generally confounded together. —

And

apt to fancy, in the Dispensations of a wonderful and good God, towards Mankind in general, and ourselves in particular. By this we have likewise a Rule to solve those surprising Appearances amongst us concerning Original Sin; of Election and Reprobation, &c. in this present World — Hence too, such as we see from the very Cradle, cut out as it were and destined, to an evil Course of Life and Destruction, (like Vessels of Dishonour), notwithstanding the utmost Care and incessant Pains taken in their Education, for “The Ungodly are froward, even from their Mother’s Womb; as soon as they are born, they go astray and “speak Lies;” (*Psal. LVIII. 3.* compare *Gen. VIII. 21.*) and on the other Hand, others even before they are ripened to any Degree of Reflection and Utterance, who discover by their very Features and Gestures, a sweetness of Temper, an innate Goodness, Meekness and ductility in their Dispositions, as if inherent to their very Frame and Nature, that makes them not require all that Trouble and Concern for their Instruction and Edification in Morals, that is so absolutely needful with the former, inflexible and untoward ones, proud, morose, cruel. Why Mankind are endued with different Qualifications and mental Endowments, various Propensities and Dispositions, Taste and Discernment in Morals, † and the Bounties and Blessings of Providence are so very unequally dispensed; all may on this Hypothesis be cleared

And surely this Reasoning is perfectly established, by the present System of political Government over Mankind: Where lingering and painful Imprisonments and Punishments are the appointed Lot of Criminals, as justly regarding solely this aforementioned Relation. — But this new Thought and Conception of the Matter, still more clearly and entirely displays the Justice and Mercy of God, as it gives to *Original Sin*, a Degree infinite and boundless, by supposing it first committed in *Heaven*, and therefore *Hell*, its proper Place of Punishment, is naturally and necessarily opposed to it; and consequently *this*, a World, purely intermediate, where in *alone* we must determine whether to rise again, or sink deeper *for evermore*, (in the *sacred Phrase*,) intirely to forsake Sin and let go Displeasure, or still wander in those perplexing Mazes without End as it were; and either to renew our Acquaintance with Satan and resolve to continue Servants of Mammon, or instantly break off and turn faithfully to God, until he have Mercy and abundantly pardon us.

† Some there are, as totally incapable of all Feeling for others; as void of Sensibility and Pity, for the Miseries and Distresses of their poor Brethren in the Flesh; as they are insusceptible of Pleasure, at the most exquisite Harmony of Sounds. Are equally torpid and dead, in respect to both, and this too by Nature; having no Sort of Taste and Relish, for either the Charms of Melody or sweetness of Sympathy.

cleared up and justified to our Understandings. — This seems to be the most obvious Meaning of those remarkable Words. (Wisd. of Sol. VIII. 19, 20.) “ For I was a witty Child, and had a good Spirit. — Yea, rather being good, “ I came into a Body undefiled. ” Comp. Eccclus. I. 14. — Hence we imagine, we conceive, how is derived this visible Proneness of the human Soul to Evil. — Why it sets out with a natural Obliquity and strong Bias impressed thereon, from the First, more or less, in a Life depraved from Good. — And by this Method of Contemplating the Matter, our Surprise is much allayed, at seeing the whole World lie in the wilderness and barren Condition it is, full of Brambles, Briars and Thorns; and very little of good Fruit springing up amongst them, to a flourishing and comely State of Maturity: Exactly resembling the easy, sprightly and very accurate Picture, which our blessed Saviour hath drawn of it, in the Parable of the *Sower* especially. (See *Matt.* XIII.)

IN a *prior* and the *original* State then, we may suppose it was, where our First Parents strangely fell; there *first* was sown the fatal Seed, of all future universal Evil, that struck deep Root into this World; and hence *we all* got the Contagion, that causes the pestiferous Impurity of our natural Habit. And thus is the Introduction of Evil amongst *us*, rendered easy to conceive and account for. And that it should be produced among the superior Orders at first, is not difficult to Conception. For much more so is it, to understand how a *Creature*, can in *any* State, be absolutely and Perfectly beyond a *possibility* of lapsing. “ For “ He chargeth his Angels with Folly, yea, the Heavens “ are not clean in his Sight; ” and what is possible, may happen to *be*;

“ Who acts by Force impell’d, can nought deserve,

“ And Wisdom short of infinite, may swerve, ”

ARBURTHNOT. §

THIS Reasoning will carry us on to discern, without much Surprise therefore, the further Fall of *Adam* and *Eve*, in their more limited and degraded State of Humanity, *extraduce*, as I may say, being originally contaminated; and

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extends

§ If it be here asked; (says the great and very amiable Dr. Clarke,) since God is the supreme infinite Good, and there is no Power independent upon *His*; why then are not *all* Things made good? “ For *who* “ *hath resisted his Will*? ” The Answer is, — “ That Freedom of “ Will, is essential to the Being of rational Creatures: So that absolute “ Power

extends our View, till at last, Oh ! what an Ocean of Mire and Dirt do we behold the whole World, now again become ! How does it still too sadly lie stagnated, in noxious and intolerable Vapours like a *Dead Sea*. — The whole Mass is, now sure ! thoroughly leavened and fermented, to the highest permitted Degree.

THE Doctrine of Predestination to our respective Conditions in *this* World, according to God's everlasting Decrees and the divine Councils of his own sovereign Will, so far as is delivered in the Scriptures, and that is pretty positively by St. *Paul* to the *Romans*, Chap. VIII. and IX, may be thus evidently defended and firmly established. (Compare *Jer* 1. 5.) For the *Foreknowledge* of God he here speaks of, (Ver. 29) is afterwards explained by him, as being "before the Foundation of the World." (*Eph.* 1. 4, 5.) And may not this "Choosing and Predestinating, (which "are so fully declared and asserted) in Him, (*Jesus Christ*)," be according to the greater or lesser Degrees of the Offence, of each particular Spirit, at this sad Revolt with Satan ? And by this perhaps, each hath retained and brought with him into this World, a proportionable Degree and Quantity of Original Sin and Guilt, and consequently of God's remaining Wrath and Indignation thereat. Some, so much as serves to form and tinge the very Features of the Face and Muscles, or Covering at least of the Body, with a gloomy, black and saturnine Aspect ; the Vehicle being prepared fit and suitable, both in Form and Colour, to become a proper Receptacle for each respective Spirit or Percipient. || Hence may spring that Connection or Union between Soul and Body, and effect of the one on the other, so indissoluble and undiscoverable ; and hence perhaps the pretended Art of *Physiognomy*, had its Rudiments in the World. — This for ought we can tell, is the Cause of that amazing Degradation we see amongst Mankind, spread over the Face of the whole Earth ; from the true reformed Christians in a little Corner of it, to the *Hottentots* and natural Savages, differing but little seemingly from real Brutes, in the Retention and Indulgence of their grossest

"Power over-ruling that Freedom, would be destroying that Nature which it had created. And therefore, that possibility of Evil, which "is consequent upon Freedom, is reasonable to be permitted." (Sermon II, On the Omnipotence of God)

|| But I would by no means be thought to mean, by this uncommon Hint, as if it was constantly and invariably thus. No. I beg I may be interpreted fairly with Charity and Candour.

est Passions, in many of its larger Parts. — And so from being free-born Subjects, happy under the Enjoyment of the glorious Gospel of Peace and Liberty, in the Protestant Countries of *Europe*, thro' its vast Monarchies of Tyranny and Slavery bound down under Ignorance and Superstition, we may trace the human Soul in its strange decline, sinking gradually to a State of mere Nature ; endowed with different personal Degrees of the moral Sense, and of outward Privileges, Advantages and Opportunities for improving it, (on which our future Bliss in Glory so entirely depends,) even till some of our own Rank in this wonderful Chain, scarcely indicate more valuable Qualifications, than mere animal Life, or bare Instinct ; and accordingly are made the usual Commodity for Merchandize, in several Places in other Quarters of the Globe, to be as Slaves in common with the ordinary Fate of domestic Brutes. There being a palpable Characteristic difference, in the Species even of *Human* Kinds, some of the lowest of which can scarcely be called *Rationals*. Infomuch that it is really difficult to know, where to draw a Line between the Classes of *Beings* and to assign to every Species its proper Rank and Station. And so it is we find, some, even whole Communities and entire large Countries of People, that still are, as it were, perfect Devils incarnate, and for all Generations thereof. * But on the other Hand, there are others in their mental Endowments and moral Perfections, more free and clean from gross Stains and Pollutions ; having made considerable Progress, in the Recovery of the original divine Nature and Resemblance to their Maker, blessed be God for it !

So we see, these *Credenda*, this sort of Doctrine and Belief, does not only justify and make good, the Reasonableness of this wonderful Gradation of Things in this Life, which the Divines have fairly cleared up against the Infidels and Atheists, consistently with God's moral Attributes ; but it goes further, even *a priori* to shew the Justice, Equity and necessity of it, in the gracious Scheme of Creation. — We are hereby likewise deprived, of all Arguments usually brought by wicked, false and daring

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Men,

* And, Oh shocking Thought ! Nor need we go out of *Christianity*, to find Instances of this, not a few ! Yea even in the Heads, and *Supreme* of some, that have the Impiety to esteem themselves very good Christians, and to the Exclusion of *all* others, from a Participation or future Happiness with them ! But perhaps out of which Number, may be pick'd Particulars, that are a seeming and almost a positive Proof sure, of the whole Truth of this Supposition.

Men, in Proof of our Discharge from the Performance of the Duties required in the Gospel ; as being already absolutely predestinated and determined, forcibly, by God, to good or bad. — But then let me ask, does not the same Word of God, from whence these Sophists and malevolent Casuists took up this beggarly Argument, (and which I heartily wish I could once see firmly established, as the infallible and true Catholic *Standard of divine Truth*, amongst all Christians,) declare and strictly enjoin the Observance of these actual and positive Duties, on Pain of Damnation; as being the only *possible* Restoratives adapted to our fallen State? (How are you then to extricate yourselves from this Dilemma? “ Oh ye of little Faith! ” And are you not fairly caught in your own Trap, “ and pinched “ in the Stocks? ”) And thus all the heavy Invectives they are apt to throw out against the Deity, on these Accounts, are hereby rendered indefensible and fallacious and desperately wicked: For He “ hath shewed thee, O Man! what “ is Good; and what doth the Lord *require* of thee, but to “ do Justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with “ thy GOD? Since without Holiness no Man shall see the “ Lord. Wherefore the Law is holy, and the Commandment is holy, just and good. ” — And so both the Need of this *Probation-State* and of Discipline, in the World, and our succeeding or miscarrying therein according to our Behaviour in it, appears on this Supposition, to be owing only to ourselves; and we have now, and shall have at the last, none else to blame in the latter Case: But it is God alone to whom all Thanks and Praise are due, for his unbounded Mercy and such amazing Goodness, in affording us an easy Possibility of obtaining an inconceivably great Reward for ever hereafter, attended with present strong, engaging and lucrative Inducements; and all annexed, to our sincere Endeavours after this our blissful Renewal, it being an everlasting Scheme, of redeeming, reconciling Love, and of Righteousness to be imputed to all that do Works meet for Repentance, which he hath in Hand; full of Wonder! full of Wisdom!

S E C T. II.

THE unequal Distributions of Rewards and Punishments, or, rather Comforts and Calamities, to Men in this World; the very best and most strictly virtuous of them, frequently suffering the Pains, Pressures, &c. most suitable to the Deserts of the worst Part thereof; and very commonly

ly these latter, blessed with all the Enjoyments here that they can wish for: Tho' we are assured, the one *have their Reward* here; and it is such a designed Trial of the Virtue of the other, as will much enhance theirs hereafter; yet this Transposition of Circumstances and Deserts, I think, can scarcely be satisfactorily accounted for, with Regard *only* to the different Treatment and Acceptation of them, in their to be exchanged and opposite Conditions in the next State, without endless Difficulties, both to our present Experience and Sense of Things, and the Declarations and Promises of Scripture about it, without *this Retrospection*. As in Cases of Melancholy, Despondency, or Distraction, too often the very Product of a severe Fate to the best and most humbly thinking Mortals: By which the unhappy Patient, thro' natural and unavoidable Infirmary in Body, is rendered unable to do that reasonable Service which he so earnestly in Spirit aspires after. — And Instances there are, where a total Dejection of Spirit, servile Dread, and slavish-Bashfulness, frequently obstruct that vigorous Exertion of the pious, devout, and social Affections, which should seem needful to work out and secure a Portion of eternal Bliss; (nay sometimes may such a one be drove to commit the greatest Crimes) for thus he argues. "What fond Parent can chastize the Child that he loveth, and scourge every Son that he receiveth," without some preceding Act of Disobedience, proceeding from a vitiated Mind? (For so to behave indiscriminately to *all*, without proportionate Regard to their different Principles, would not only be vastly imprudent, indiscreet, and dangerous, but actually cruel and unjust: And much more would it be so, to reverse the Order and Fitness of the Rules of Discipline, by chastizing and correcting the *Obedient*, and conferring Favours and Blessings on the *refractory* and *stubborn*.) But to which latter Disposition this ardent Soul is conscious, he in his present State, as far as may be, is quite the Reverse. — For perhaps the strongest Conflict that a frail ignorant Mortal can experience, may happen between Reason and Conscience, thro' the Prejudice of Education, or a naturally weak, over-scrupulous Temper, bordering on Superstition. And such a faithful and pious Soul, can scarcely persuade himself to think, he hath presumptuously done enough *here*, to deserve all this from a good God; whilst it is easy to imagine, he may have done more than enough *heretofore*, to merit infinitely worse from an incensed Judge. And therefore why may one not,

as the most easy Way to reconcile us to the present Sense of God's Goodness, in the glorious Work of the Creation; the ever adorable Mystery, "of the Love of God in Christ, "reconciling the World unto himself;" and universal Happiness of all his Creatures, the very Essence of the whole divine Plan; and Experience of Things: Suppose this World, a Place to afflict and *punish* us, in a low and primary Degree, for our Misdemeanor in a pre-existent one; (for what can we call absolute and real *Punishment*, if such a natural unhappy Temper be not; and where else must we look, for the just Cause of it?) As well at the same Time, as the last *Probation* before we must enter into an Eternity. A Thought this, that might bring some Relief in the Case.

SURELY that Person must have made but little Observation, as to this Point, that does not see very sufficient Evidence, both externally and internally, to persuade him of the *penal Nature* of this present Life and Portion of our *Being*, in some sort: When he reflects on the widely differing Estates and Conditions of Mankind placed therein. The extremely great and unavoidable Misery, that some poor Creatures are doomed to endure; others at the same Time sharing a moderate Degree of Comfort, for the most Part; whilst others again, partake of both Pleasure and Pain alternately, depending on their present Temper, or general Crisis of Body. This Matter being so ordered amongst them, † and on the whole, as puts it beyond a possibility, I think, of being so easily reconcileable with infinite Clemency and Love, on any other Plan. — For does *such* a Plan, do adequate Honour to its infinitely gracious Author, which *must* require the unavoidable Misery of *Individuals*, in order to bring about the *general Good*? Indeed the common Disorders and Convulsions that appear in the World, both intellectual and elementary, do deeply mark it, as the Production of an offended and displeased Being; Yea, the very constituted Order in Nature itself, plainly proclaims the same. According to which, one worthless Wretch, by his superior Advantage of Abilities, Endowments, and Situation, often rises and towers up to Dignity and Honours, (such

† I mean not only the inferior Orders, but rather ourselves, the Top of the visible great Work. — For there we find the greatest Instability, Irregularity, and promiscuous Possession, of the several Degrees of the one, or the other; and at such unforeseen Intervals, as plainly discover to us a dispensing Hand originally, as well as severally and momentarily, dealing them out to each respective Patient.

(such as they be!) upon the Misfortunes and Ruin of his virtuous but hapless Neighbour. — And implanted *Power* and *Dominion*, tho' expressly delegated to Man alone, yet is by an equal Subordination maintained, from Mankind thro' the whole Scale of Beings; which enables one Rank to destroy and devour those below, for his daily Food and necessary Subsistence. And tho' Man be the nominally appointed Sovereign, over all the brutal Kinds, yet in his Turn from Infancy to Old Age, is he subjected either to the rapacious Talons of the Fowls of the Air; or the voracious Jaws of the Beasts of the Earth and Fishes of the Sea. These are Circumstances unseemly adapted, to give this Creation the striking Appearance of a purely Divine *Original*; the *prime* genuine Offspring of infallible Perfection: But rather more resembling it to a *secondary* or *after-Thought*; a wonderful Piece of Patchwork (I speak with Reverence) of Him, who can bring Order from Confusion; but so neatly executed is it, as to be undiscoverable by finite Capacities.

SURELY such extreme Miseries as this Life holds forth to View, as *Probationary* only, are for that single Purpose quite disproportionate in themselves; and incompatible with transcendent Wisdom and Goodness, towards such naturally frail and helpless Mortals. On this Occasion, what crowding Thoughts torment ones melting Soul! Oh the hideous Scenes that here present themselves to the affrighted Imagination! Poisonings, Murders, Massacres, Effusions of Blood; all the Horrors of War, Distresses of Persons, Ruin of Families, whole Countries flooded with the Blood of their Inhabitants, Depopulations, Devastations, and Destructions, even to the blotting out of Names, and total Oblivion of Nations of Yore, flourishing and famous. — This on the Side of Politicks. — And what see we on the other Side of the Piece? A horrible Gloom, Obscurity, Blackness of Darkness itself, overwhelming! Oh Religion! Religion! Thou Barbarian, Savage, Mangler, Fiend, Fury! But what Religion? Of Superstition, Hell, and the Devil! 'Tisthou didst cause the Passion, Agony, Sweat of Blood, the Curses, Revilings, Indignities, Blasphemies, Cross and Spear, against the blessed Son of God and Saviour of Men. And, Oh thou *Protestant*; thou only pious Friend, remaining to pure genuine *Christianity*. Dost thou indeed stand single and deserted, amidst this strange, wide-spread Disorder and Confusion; the Scoff and Jest, the Contempt and Hatred, of thy Countrymen, thy Brethren? Look up then from this
Vale

Vale of Misery and Tears, unto thy enthroned princely Saviour, before whom, the loftiest Cherubs of God now do cheerful Homage, thy true Pattern, in his Life; thy only Friend, in his Death; and great Exemplar in his own, of thy Resurrection; and who hath for thee obtained, immense and endless Felicity! Let this, all this then; calm, cherish, harmonize thy disconsolate Breast. — And are these at last, the grand *Aera's* of Chronology; the great Events, by which its Tables are extended? Is it with *such* pompous Occurrences, the *historic* Page is smeared? Or is it the Chicanery, Flattery, Vanity, Pride, Selfishness, and the long black Parade of courtly Wickedness, Lawyer, and Priestcraft, in our High-places, that chiefly fills our Annals? Then it were to be wished, such Things had never been founded in our Ears; that they had all been forever concealed from the World, veiled in endless Darkness, buried in Oblivion.

SUCH an insupportable Load of present Misery, purely to qualify for the Enjoyment of future and invisible Felicity, must more naturally, impress the Mind, I say, with tormenting Doubts and Anxieties, about our *remaining* Condition of Existence; noxious Prejudices against this rigid State of Things; unworthy Notions, of the Former of it; dangerous Conceptions of his Attributes, and a general Despondency, Dejection and Gloom, will be too apt to arise, darkening the whole Face of Nature; as on Experience I fear, we find is too often the Case. But which would be entirely cleared off, all Difficulties removed, and Fears, repining and Complaints, quite suppressed in all Minds, by all supposing present Evils are permitted, as properly and strictly *Punishments* of Evil past, and *therefore* both needful and just; as well as *Tryals* of our Virtue. And this View at last guides us to a safe and literal Construction of the express and solemn Declarations of Scripture, in a qualified Sense at least, that God is the immediate *Creator of Evil*, as well as of *Light, Darkness, Peace, and Righteousness*. (*Isa.* XLV. 7, 8.) But all which Forms of Language, and other Representations of the severe or inversed Ways of God in the World, on any other System, we find to require Evasions, Artifice, and Sophistry, to save indemnified the most essential Characters of the Deity: not aware that at the same Time, it mutilates, weakens, and invalidates, the sacred *Word of Truth*. An Opinion then, this, truly worthy to be universally embraced, being sufficiently self-recommended and applauded, and confirmed by its own internal

ternal evidence : And will cause a general acquiescence and humble submission, under the all-righteous and infinitely just dispensations, of an offended but placable God—

FOR I own myself rather a Fautor of the opinion, of the very worthy Mr. *Wollaston*, That the bitter ingredients of misery, predominate in this state of our severe tryal. Neither do I suppose, that it can be preferred to non-existence; but in the same view with St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* XV. 19. And from whence I infer, a general tacit consent to its truth. For if *some* “ are fond of existence (here) love (this) life, “ and are extremely unwilling to part with it,” (See *Indiff. for Relig. inexcus.* P. 24) it is the prosperous Wicked on whom the fear of Death hath fallen ; whilst with the truly Good, it is invariably found otherwise : For *to die is far better, 'tis his gain ; his affections are fixed* upon invisible eternals, and *not on empty sublunaries*. For 'tis very obvious that there is even here, much *real* misery, when its *perfectly* reverse, sweet and unmixed happiness, is not to be found perhaps amongst us : (See *Relig. of Nat. del.* 7th Ed. P. 377, *et seq.*) The best we can say of this, being, that it is a freedom from the other, but not a positive attainment and possession *in alteram partem*. For that is quite disproportionate to the present state of things, where every pleasure has its alloy of fear. Yes even Time itself in this case, is scarcely to be credited, 'tis quite deceitful, since an equal portion of it in pleasure, seems to pass away quicker than in pain ; and thereby in some sort becomes itself, a real bitter ingredient of misery : And plainly shewing the former to be in fact less substantial and intrinsic, than the latter, which affects the mind with more heavy, solid, intense and lasting impressions—Hence 'tis plain, this life is not fitted for rewards, but rather to allot some certain degree of actual *punishment* : And surely too, for some *prior* misconduct, somewhat long since past—* And

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then

* For is it not made discoverable, and even loudly proclaimed, by little Infants, as soon as brought into the world, by their maladies, cries and very affecting screams ? And this our entrance into misery together with life, and its equal continuance therewith, is by no possible way accountable for, or can be made consistent and reconcileable with any other Hypothesis ; I humbly presume. For can we imagine it would be thus ; would the very first salutes of perfect, little Innocents and pure Spirits, think you, be, these “ signs of Woe ;” and in conjunction with her, whom we know expressly doomed to *sorrow* and *pain*, at this time ; Would or should there not be something to distinguish by, I say, if we were not all, by *Nature Children of Wrath* ? Born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward.

then again, tho' the difference in the best of men and the worst, the vastness between the extremes of the moral character, as maintained by different agents; and the intermediate degrees of it, so far transcend our scanty computation: Though the houses be almost shook with the volleys of oaths in our streets, and the skies near rent asunder, (as one may imagine,) by the blasphemies and profanations of the one sort, yet that no thunder or earthquake from beneath, often opens the earth's deep mouth, instantly to swallow down and engulf the vile miscreant in her dreadful pit, nor lightnings from above blast his daring tongue, whilst calling down his deserved vengeance, is on the one hand, more than can reasonably be expected; so on the other, seems it rather less than might be hoped, that the true piety, fervent zeal, faith and righteousness, and singular virtue in all godliness and honesty, of the other man, whose whole life is one continued scene of honourable actions and deportment, should never be favourably distinguished with a silent whisper, from some attendant Seraph, nor that he should be at all applauded, and confirmed in his inward feelings and perceptions, answerable to his labours and entreaties, by the open assistance of a propitious *guardian Angel*: These odd appearances, must, on any other solution, not a little stagger the best of mortals.

"For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all
 "this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works,
 "are in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or
 "hatred, by all that is before them—All things come alike
 "to all, there is one event to the righteous and to the
 "wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the un-
 "clean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth
 "not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that swear-
 "eth, as he that feareth an oath—This is an evil among
 "all things that are done under the sun, that there is one
 "event unto all." (*Eccles. IX. 1, 2, 3.*)—For though all
 have sinned here, and are become obnoxious to divine anger, yet not all equally so, by very perceptible great degrees; besides many widely differencing particulars, known only between ourselves and the invisible beings, divinely commissioned as inspectors over us. And whilst the valableness of the one, by their diligent cultivation of the moral sense, is so inestimable over that of the other, and the more extraordinarily now, as these days are more enlightened, yet, I say, that both should be alike indulged, or alike afflicted, and the rain should descend to the equal
 emolument

emolument of both, without any positive assurance, or sensible indication, of the one being "justified rather than the other;" evinces indeed, that "God does not respect the persons of men," though in such an absolute and arbitrary kind of sense of the expression, as, I think, can be no otherwise explained and understood, than by the foregoing hypothesis. For else some, we know, cannot be well too much encouraged, whilst others can hardly be overmuch beat down and baffled; as needful to give and preserve in both, a due sense of their constant and entire dependence on Providence, and excite and raise them up to a truly virtuous spirit, and the noblest pitch of thankfulness and devout gratitude.—For I should think, (with great deference may I argue) that were our treatment here, such as had regard only to our present merits or demerits, there would no doubt sure, be some discernible difference made, whilst in the body; if not to give a merciful check to the hardened sinner, yet to animate such as carry on a continual warfare with carnal frailty, and keep *them*, that *they* may be no further offensive, than through inevitable nature and necessity. And likewise that we might not be left in such constant surprize, at the *divine* Government not itself exemplifying, in a more conspicuous and stated manner, by its own *celestial* ministers; what Inspiration seems to recommend to all *human* Institutions, (too capricious, impotent, heedless and ungodly, to do his will, or for fitting instruments of his justice, but of his wrath alone;) as in juris-prudence needful, for the sake of order and virtue. See *Rom. Ch. XIII. 1* *Pet. II. 13, 14*. And yet, though in some instances it must be by all acknowledged, that the hand of Providence is very visible in the disposal and events of things, in others he is pleased to keep himself entirely undiscoverable by us, and some that we are apt to flatter ourselves, might be of great moment too. For certainly, we might still be governed by a more *equal* Providence, (as our predecessors, the Jews, were once an instance of it,) yet without any way altering the terms of this present life, as a probationary one, or breaking in on the other, as finally and properly to reward and punish: And now that "life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel," so would this light become more irresistibly strong, by such an anticipation and foretaste, in temporal rewards, of the eternal ones which are to follow. And this too, in all due reverence, one might suppose, the *Christian* Dispensation more worthily, (though perhaps not more *necessarily*,) may

seem to require and deserve; adequately to promote the glory of God in his word and works, and agreeably to his improving plan of nature.—For the very *moral* discipline, we are here made subject to and exercised under, (over and above the consideration of *bodily*, temporal chastisements,) is likewise such, in my judgment, as essentially characterizes *this*, a Life, greatly *punitive*: We being not only trained up in the virtues, necessary to fit us for a state of angelic bliss *to follow*, this being seemingly the *ultimate* use of it; but of which the *primary* intent may be supposed to be, at the same time to try, and inure us to such as have a manifest *retrospect*, being of a strictly penal nature. Such are, of the first sort, not only meekness and humility, forbearance and even love of enemies and all such as directly tend to debase us, mortify and pull down our towering pride and earthly high-mindedness; and subdue all corrupt passions; and make us to fix our affections on things above, (see *The Guardian*, No. 20, 21:) but at the same time, I say, not to murmur or complain at most dreadful misfortunes; and such as are unaccountable upon any other supposition; patience in the denial of our most modest and reasonable requests, or if granted, (as it thus generally happens) yet being at some future time and in such secret and indirect manner, as makes it almost imperceptible to us; an absolute submission under such crosses, perturbations and inward fore feelings, as seem to be nothing less than the inflictions of an angry Father, though without the least sense, or consciousness of the particular cause, or possibility of obtaining a true knowledge of it, whereby we might appease him, and take direct measures to restore peace and tranquillity within: (For, [and of all afflictions the greatest to a sincerely good man,] in some critical and nice points, 'tis hard for us, we are unworthy, to know what the will of the Lord is; and to be certain, whether he be angry or pleased, at what we do for the best; to have in some circumstances, a full understanding of our perfect and indispensable duty and proper rule of action, to guide us to a right choice in the performance of it; though we have sought it carefully, with much importunity, and perhaps with tears.) The equal (if not greater) infelicities and sufferings, on the whole, of the best of men in common with the worst, and their oftener disappointments; and wilful violences done them; insomuch that it is imperceptible, or far from certain to us, that any particular regard is had to whatever we do or say, or that God takes

takes cognifance of mens actions purely in the view of individuals: (And this is the more surprizing, on account of the peculiar promifes of the Gospel, by reason of the glory that excelleth; [as St. Paul fpeaks of *Chriftianity*] for if that which is done away [the miniftration of Condemnation] was glorious, much more [fays he] that which remaineth [the miniftration of Righteoufnefs,] is, or fhould be, glorious: And agreeably to the enlivening descriptions of the Gospel times, through all antient prophecy:).—Thefe and innumerable fuch instances ferve to confirm in one, this idea of the prefent mixed ftate of mortal nature. Thus there arifes to the pious foul great anxiousnefs and perfect forrow, from a due fenfe of his ignorance, weaknefs and failings. And fometimes the more one ftives, the worfe it is, at times one would leaft expect it fo; and amongst the neareft and deareft relations, are fuch miferies moft frequent and heavy too, as in instances of commifiration and friendship—Thus an afflicted virtuous and fingularly good man, the only true Hero of *Chriftian* courage and fortitude, feems, as it were, fupported on the point of a piercing fpear, between earth and heaven; like his crucified Saviour, in a wonderful manner, for a time, is feemingly the repudiated out-caft to, and fport of, both worlds, of Men and Devils! Oh! what a miferable condition this! to be fo qualified, as to be too heavenly-minded for the common converfe of fellow mortals, nay, as makes him the fool and mock of the huge Vulgar, and yet perhaps far fhort, of what is needful to procure a fenfible communion with fuperior intellectual beings! What at prefent can he do? Let him caft about in his mind for relief, in his fad diftrefs and perplexity, however he will, ftill, filence and an empty, dark void, is his cruel lot—Like as *Milton* complains of his bodily, fo is the eye of fuch an unhappy wretch's mind, in this cafe, “by dim fuffufion veil'd,” and only an “universal blank of *super-natural* works” he finds; and which is by impatience and reflection, but the more magnified and enlarged to his imagination. No! all efforts are fruitlefs. Not a whifper ever fo fecret ever fo gentle, is permitted to him. (See *Iſa.* XXX, 21.) No influence on the foul, nor by day nor by night, to make it fee particular doubts and fcruples, in their right colours. And as for Confcience, 'tis frequently too uncertain, prejudiced, and unduly tempered, is either too hard, or tender, to be altogether a proper conductor and fure guide in fuch nice cafes; and even her witnefs or evidence, fhould be cautiously re-
lied

laid upon : But rather Reason, should here take the right-hand of fellowship. (See p. 29.) And all this is the rather surprizing, because one might suppose, there would still be a sufficient, and indeed a more direct and pure, *trial* of *virtue* by the choice of the Will which it shall adhere to at last, after one is enabled absolutely to distinguish the right and wrong, good and evil, sound reason and conscience from groundless fear, prejudice, and superstition, in all needful truths, saving knowledge, and required instances of devout obedience. But thus it too often (as it should seem on any other plan,) is found to be ; the very best of men, the Faithful, and true Disciples of our Lord, being left entirely to themselves, destitute of a steady, sure and unerring pilot, any constant and infallible monitor, guide and director, and sufficient light ; to grovel and feel out their own way, and pore on thro' this gloomy and dangerous passage, in great *fear and trembling*. For surely the very nature of pure *Probation*, requires that moral Agents should be indulged with some plain and certain, stated Rule, whereby at all times to know their real state and condition ; and in what particulars they please or displease. But where to find this Rule, I profess, I know not ; whatever those Gentlemen mean, who affect to talk so much about *Grace*, *Justification by Faith* alone, and *Assurance*, &c. or notwithstanding they may still go on, thus to delude themselves and thousands of others ; and however they are to answer for the horrid havock they make, by such *abominable Assurance* and audacious presumption, as most seriously it is—

BUT AND if this matter, of such great importance to the world in general, be hereby cleared up to suitable satisfaction and usefulness, without endangering the needful tenets of our holy faith, by a guilty *addition thereto*, or *diminution from it* ; 'tis worthy of the highest acceptance of all men, as a sovereign remedy, fitted to the peculiar temper of each passive and disordered soul ; and may therefore too, serve for a healing Catholicon, to restore the quiet and ease of our mind, under its present operation. What other so sure encouragement and exhilarating cordial, hath the virtuous to support him amidst temptations, violent assaults † and painful toils ; and reconcile his doubts and misgiving

† “ Temptations *spiritual*, and violent assault, of the Devil”—I might here take occasion to introduce, the surprizing case of the *Demoniacs*, of old, and persons labouring under some kinds of nervous complaints,

misgiving language from within, so as to induce him at last to submit to the will of God, with active and chearful resolution, patience and religious loyalty : As from a sense of his being upon the ascent ; and speedy attainment to an everlasting recovery, and an eternal weight of glory and reward ? Or where else do we see the proper discouragements that the Bad meet with in a vicious course, to make them “ turn again, and do the thing that is right and speak “ the truth from their hearts ?” In short, what at present do we “ discern between the righteous and the wicked ; “ between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him “ not ?” as the Prophet *Malachi* speaks (Ch. III. 16, 17, 18.) between the truly good, faithful and virtuous man, and him that liveth as without God in the world : For the one hath little, or nothing to hope in this world, the other as little to fear. But perhaps the particular time, *that day*, of this discriminating power, is not as yet *returned*, as he intimates ; (comp. *Acts* III. 19, 20.) but, I hope, ’tis not far off, and that “ the Jewels of the Lord of hosts,” will speedily shine out in surpassing lustre. For even to the last gasp, the peace which each enjoys, to all discernment seems nearly the same ; in most instances now-a-days, as much composedness appears in the one as the other, though their hopes and fears ought to bear no kind of proportion, or similitude. But the foregoing doctrine, which seems to have some countenance from scripture, as well as great support from the experience of what passes within and without, at home and abroad, conduces mainly to cause a conscious silence and mental acquiescence, and forcibly to
create

plaints, and strange fits, and insuperable habits and panicks, blasphemous thoughts and purterbed imaginations, at this time. The former, probably extraordinarily at that season, given up to the open and free possessions of *evil Spirits* ; that the blessed Messiah might display the sovereign dominion and power of God, delegated to him, over their cruel tyranny ; and signally express his love to Man, and hatred to Devil, and thereby confirm his veracity to the world : The latter perhaps, “ suffered to be tempted, sifted, buffeted, and tormented, with the “ Thorn in the Flesh,” by them, (as *St. Paul* was, *2 Cor.* XII. 7. and which seems to have been the case of poor *Job*.) in a more secret manner, and much less and diminished degree. But the learned Reader, will, no doubt, excuse my enlarging on this difficult subject, and be much better pleased with this very brief and reserved way of intimating my sentiments about it ; which such a great variety of scripture passages seem well to countenance. (Compare *Luke* XXII. 31. *1 Cor.* V. 5. *Gal.* IV. 13, 14. and *1 Pet.* V. 8. and with *Job* I. 7. and II. 2. *Psa.* LXXVIII. 49. Bible vers. and *Ephes.* II. 2, 3.)

create a religious dread too, of offending, and further tempting an indulgent God, when we poor, impotent, weak Mortals, are thoroughly actuated by due sense and reflection. And seeing then there is room to hope inconceivable benefits, from a doctrine that can dispel and obviate such violent doubts and objections; and not only thereby prevent the *wicked* from running into such extremes, by cutting short all rational and well grounded expectance of any more trials or further means of discipline, when once this present, so gentle and easy, is over, or escaping if they neglect so *great Salvation*; but likewise to stir up the *good*, to an exercise of all religious duty much above a mediocrity, and confirm their faith and hope in futurity through all present opposition; it certainly merits most serious consideration, amongst all mankind.

S E C T. III.

A GAIN, as the last section was intended for an appeal principally to the reasoning Moralist, so in this I should think I may likewise apply with equal success, to the feelings of the single-hearted and sincere Saint, for the truth and confirmation of this fruitful *position*. Does not such a one continually lament the sad effects, produced by the load and heavy incumbrance of flesh, he is here doomed to labour under? Which necessarily clogs and depresses his rising soul, in her best and strenuous efforts, the most vigorous fallies she is yet capable of; and smears over her few lucid intervals. This serves to call off, or distract, her much laboured attention; and render her fancied rapturous flights and ardent aspirings, duly attempered with cordial love and reverent fear, comparatively but effete and languid. Here he affrighted, now surveys "a sea of troubles;" and feels "the thousand natural Shocks, that "Flesh is Heir to." And when his daily Avocations require him to look out of himself, (where alone he enjoys the little calm and tranquillity he has allotted him,) into the wide ocean of the perturbed world; there to consider the deplorable ruin and great destruction; and see the few scattered remains, of the shipwreck'd Human Heart in general: How does this set his own, so well fraught and preserved with watchfulness and care, inwardly to grieve and bleed!—To experience the justness, of the holy Psalmist's pathetic and bitter complainings, in his LIII^d Psalm, through every rank and profession of people, that call for his attendance; and to know himself linked down to misery and

and affliction, "and numbered with such Transgressors;" from which the present state of things and its great emergencies in Society, and the duty of a good Citizen which he owes to the publick will not suffer him to extricate himself, or allow him to withdraw: To have his soothing Meditations and secret workings of his devoted Soul, (deeply smitten with a Ray of God's placid benevolence, the bright source of mercy, in that visible and most exemplary *expression* of his Love, *Christ Jesus!*) so constantly interrupted; and his earnest applications for such suitable grace and blessings, as the *glory* of the Father seems to stand engaged to give upon the word and honour of the Son, (see *John* VIII. 32. XIV. 13, &c.) not answered according to his very meek and humble requests, nay seemingly perhaps sometimes, as if denied with apparent marks of anger and disgust; and when the so near approach of the very last days of the world, and the quickening Promises of the *Word of Life*, more stedfast than the heavens, incite him daily to hope and look for, some peculiar and distinguishing favours from above, in small, but *sensible* reward for, and present encouragement to proceed in, so steady a perseverance in well doing, and unwearied diligence in every momentary and minute part of his entire duty! And though he hath ventured thus to expostulate with the Great God of mercy and compassion, and to *reason with him*, whilst exercising pure abasement of mind, and having entire submission to the Divine will and pleasure in sure reserve, with a perfect sense of his own unworthiness: Yea even *striving with him* from the very bottom of his soul, by exerting all the strength, faculties and powers of it; but yet in the full enjoyment of that temper of mind, which feels a consciousness of the most humble boldness, earnest, faithful and devout affection, *drawing near unto Him with a true heart in full assurance of faith*: And at the same time, utterly void of every the least taint of the haughty, *unjustifying* Self-sufficiency of the proud *Pharisee*: Though his spirit go out to meet the Lord, in humble, pious and devout meditation; though "he should seek the Lord, if haply he might feel after him and find him, though He be not far from every one of us"—Yet can he not say, perceive any suitable and adequate acceptance with Him, any immediate and sensible return. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do! deeper than hell, what canst thou know! The measure thereof

“ thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the “ sea ! ”—May I not presume to say, sure then no such person can choose but be uneasy, till relieved from a doubtful state of mind, (when thus suspended between *hope* and *fear*,) by some favourable assurance that his prayers are come up before God, and accepted for a memorial with him. And that his heart standeth sure, this very anxiety fully confirmeth and clearly announceth it ; therefore this consciousness of his sincerity, should make the former of these regulating qualities, hope, to preponderate in his breast with unshaken faith. And let him consider, that to produce this godly emotion and holy sorrow, is, perhaps, the very design of this hard tryal, in with-holding the accepted request of his lips ; which will not fail in due season, to induce God to shew forth some tokens of good, in this chosen vessel of his love ; for we have just reason to conclude, that there is undoubtedly an universal tendency to our happiness and God’s own glory—And no doubt can be made, but that very many of the precepts, admonitions and promises, recorded in the Gospel, were peculiarly and personally directed to the Apostles and Disciples *themselves* for their singular use and benefit, as fore experience for seventeen hundred Years hath now fully attested to *us*. And this is the only means, whereby to explain and account for this difficult and heavy charge, bearing so hard against Christ’s Religion. And this, it does highly import all modest, sincere and pious Christians, to endeavour to distinguish, for the peace and quiet of their own breasts—And therefore, let all such resolve these seeming inconsistencies, into the good will and pleasure of the Almighty. For we ought not rashly to accuse the blessed Saviour, with forgetfulness, or breach, of his promise of sending the Holy Ghost, since there is most reason to suppose these *peculiar* promises, were intended only to serve the *peculiar* necessities of the *Apostolic Age*, that grand Period of the Jewish and *Æra* of the Christian states.

THE secret purposes and divine counsels of God, are in proportion the more sublimely wise, glorious and awful, as they are unsearchable and mysterious to us : And the spiritual blessings and benefits which he thereby worketh to our souls, cannot be easily and quickly perceptible, to the circumscribed eye of our reason, whilst in the flesh ; but yet is too apt to incline frail and petulant creatures, to think rashly and hardly of him. Here then we plainly detect the lurking *pride*, in the best of human hearts ; which makes

makes them set too great a value, on their most meritorious deeds; and blinds them from discerning, that God's ways are not at all times as our ways; and think to reduce heavenly Wisdom, adorable Truths and sacred Mysteries, to the low standard of earthly arbitrement and mortal penetration. To apprehend, and pull out this most cunning and cruel traitress, from her inmost recesses; this voracious Serpent, that will devour the very vitals of religion; and entirely to eradicate this *original* and deep root of sin, the rankest of all weeds, hollow, towering, poisonous *Pride*, from its native, luxuriant and warm soil, in every ones breast; will require all the pains and unwearied application of our whole lives—For it is the most impregnable Barrier that can be set up, to stop the ingress and possession of all religious principle; being the directly opposite to the true and lovely characterizing spirit of *Humility*, since the want of a right sense of our own real vileness and absolute worthlessness, in the eye of an infinitely pure and all-perfect Being, is the grand imperfection, the Great Accusation, of *human nature*—"My Son, *glorify thy Soul in meekness*, and give it Honour according to the Dignity thereof"—(*Eccles. X. 28.*) This is the very foundation Stone of all true Religion; the first of all the heavenly Graces, that can *adorn The Christian*—

SUCH feelings and experiences as these, I say, are some of the colourings, which seem to throw that shade and gloomy cast on the present Life; as have occasioned the above cautious judgment, in regard to this moving picture of our present Habitation and low placed Abode, "in this Vale of tears and misery." But nevertheless, always remembering ourselves as still in the *Wilderness*, not yet arrived at the *Land of Promise* *; (or rather in that period

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of

* But you may object, that it doth not any thing-like come up to the supposed Type. For the Israelites then, were under the protection and guidance of a constantly encreasing series of most wonderful and glorious miracles; yes even to such profusion, as to produce all the peculiar ill effects, that extremes in every thing naturally will, and far more especially in this *extraordinary* case: But very much on the contrary the world now seems for seventeen hundred years, to have been deserted and forsaken by all the hosts of heaven, and Mankind left rather in the other extreme, quite abandoned and forlorn slaves to ignorance, prejudice, appetite and passion, with nothing but poor unassisted reason for support, very ill qualified to appease and satisfy their just murmurs, humble complaints, pious fears, doubts, &c. nor can "find Grace to "help in time of need." And therefore the present condition of things in the world, seems to bear a more just resemblance to the following supposition.

of the Christian state, between the Captivity under *anti-christian* Babylon and the last Advent of *Messiah The Prince*, into the magnificent temple of the New Jerusalem; which corresponds with the same long space in the Jewish state, bearing the same dreary character and complexion, as when the most glorious privileges enjoyed under the first temple were withdrawn during the continuance of the second; ye should, "My Brethren, count it all joy, when ye fall into " diverse temptations; knowing this, that the trying of " your Faith worketh Patience. (See *Deut. VIII. 2.*) And " let Patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire wanting nothing" (*Jam. I. 2, 3, 4.* And to such as these, let me recommend the diligent perusal of this whole Chapter, and compared with 2 *Pet. 1.*) And under such a sense and apprehension of things in the world, as is here supposed, we have most unquestionably, all the reason imaginable to acquiesce, in God's wise dispensations and good providence towards us, tho' to us they might seem ever so exceedingly rigid and severe, who certainly knoweth best what to do *with his own*; with the utmost submission, and hearty resignation, and most absolute patience: "For God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the " humble." And we may have firm confidence, that he who is able to do exceeding abundantly more than we can ask or think, doth, what *must* in the end, mostly redound to his own honour; for shall not the great Arbitrator and Judge of all the earth, do right! and that a steady perseverance in such a *meek* deportment, on our parts, as is the distinguishing characteristic of "an Israelite indeed in whom is " no guile, and a *patient* continuance in well-doing, will not fail to work out for us, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, even till we shall be replenished and filled with all the fulness of God! AMEN. (See *Spect. No 571.*)

THAT the fervent prayer of the righteous, availeth little; is not *effectual*, neither pierceth it the clouds; nor doth he now know, *if there be any Holy Ghost*, or however, Who he is; and therefore God may be said, to have "made " darkness his secret place and thick clouds to cover him," with more propriety now for ages, than in the royal Psalmist's days: No doubt, this seeming *partiality* to the seed of *Abraham* till the Captivity, in an eminent manner, and not reviving and continuing the like intercourse and familiarity with the *Christians*, and according to promise too; but rather, giving room for the uncomfortable apprehension of

of His entire absence and neglect; is the true original source of the prevailing scepticism and infidelity, that so sadly riot amongst us: And which in this prejudiced view, bears an unaccountable gloomy aspect. For as he does not prove to be *the bearer of prayer*, hence they are easily, and almost necessarily indeed, disposed to believe; that either he hath no regard at all for us, and then our best endeavours to please him will be fruitless; or else, that he is resolved to save us at any rate, and our concurrence is needless: The former of which suppositions, is perfectly humiliating, and sets before our eyes in full view, our own worthlessness; the latter of them, excites in us the strongest imagination of our inestimable value, in his sight; as if God's *own* glory and happiness, were affected by, or in great measure depended on, *our* eternal state and condition. These are therefore very dangerous extremes of sentiment, the one encouraging the highest degree of diabolical *pride*, the other the lowest pitch of unmanly despondency; and have ever been the foundation of all imposture, falsehood and delusion, that have enslaved the world to this very day; and both are full of blasphemous detraction, rob God of the honour due unto his name; and are a flagrant reviling of his divine rectitude, and supreme government over us. But 'tis entirely owing to the false medium of their own cloudy imagination; the dazzling and tremor of a distempered eye, or impatient and proud spirit, through a scanty and mean notion of things—God having constantly proportioned his gifts and blessings, to the wants and occasions of his creatures, in strict consistency with his own attributes, through all the improving stages of religion. To perfect which, is the grand object that all his manifold condescensions have tended towards, without any respect to individuals, as such, or to one people in contempt, prejudice and ruin of another. But let it, in all fairness and candour, be on the other hand observed, That as God hath nurtured and supported, directed and protected, his Church formerly, with an *immediate* out-stretched arm, so he hath as *instantly* laid his heavy hand on the wicked and ungodly members of it, to punish for their evil deeds; as abundance of instances and sad examples in *holy writ*, suffice to shew: For as is his love and mercy in the one general and grand Cause, conspicuous and immediate, so is his wrath and resentment against rebellious and apostatizing individuals, proportionably the more direct and positive. This care of his Church being that of a kind *Father*, bearing all along,

a near parallel and conformity to the nourishment, tuition, discipline and instruction, of a pious and discreet parent over his offspring, in the three grand stages of human life, infancy, puberty, and manhood: To the last of which, the present condition of the Church bears exact similitude; and therefore, 'tis an instance of consummate wisdom as well as affection, to prove her, in the main, by the use of *strong meat*, instead of *milk*; (*Heb. V. and last verse*) and now since the standing clear *revelation* by his Son, she may reasonably be left to her own management and conduct, not needing so visible and *extraordinary* a providence, as heretofore, the former being given to us in lieu of, and exchange for the latter. Now therefore must we fulfil the Apostle's strict charge to his Corinthian Christians (see first Epist. last Chap. 13, 14.) And thus this, and indeed all objections to the divine Government, of the rash Pyrrhonists and distracted Infidels, are easily obviated, and such strange (to them) phenomena *clearly* accounted for, *being understood* by the beauteous symmetry, grand œconomy, wonderful constitution, pleasing decorum, and proper *analogy* discoverable through all Nature; (*Comp. Rom. I. 16. ad fin.*) as is already begun to be demonstrated by this excellent Rule, and yet a little while, it will perfectly work about their eternal shame and confusion; there being indisputably a settled harmony, between the moral and natural worlds, as every day's experience with right application of talents, would easily point out to an unprejudiced understanding—

“ *Analogy*, Man's surest Guide below—

“ Thus far, *all Nature* calls on thy Belief!”

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

BUT at last, what can such poor, mean Wretches, as the very *best* of us, expect, *supernatural*; when we find even the blessed Son of God himself, whilst in the greatest need, and extremity of suffering-Nature, bitterly crying out, and positively bemoaning, an unexpected *dereliction* of his Father! Oh! was ever sorrow like unto the sorrow of Him, “ Who knew no sin, neither was guile found in “ his mouth!”—Multitudes of things of this nature, are there, much plainer to be felt than described, that *ex abundantia* make to the *premises* contended for; abundance of strange rubs in this life, which continually admonish us of their certainty. The loud voice, obvious and encouraging doctrine, of this our experienced ignorance, dubiouness and fears, in such essential concerns, *is*, the evident
need

need of a yet more clear and perfect Revelation, an "*everlasting Gospel*," to enlighten and prepare good men for the *Kingdom of Righteousness*, in the near approaching *millennial* State.—But to return—

S E C T. IV.

I Think the supposition of our *prior* existence, and astonishing lapse or fall, does therefore greatly aid us in unravelling the perplexities of Predestination, and explaining that doctrine that many charge so heavily, and therefore with the highest rashness and impiety, on Providence, as preceding our demerits; for this is hereby (and hereby only perhaps) proved to be quite groundless and false, and thus assisteth, or leadeth to a plausible (at least) justification thereof. For tho' Predestination, *unconditional*, in its most absolute sense, cannot perhaps be clearly and positively supported by it and evidently accounted for, yet on that supposition, the mind is further satisfied concerning it; and from this new light let in upon it, induced to acquiesce under an acknowledgment of the truth of the doctrine and reasonableness thereof, free from all unwarranted and foolish extremes of superstitious entanglements, in such degree as is suitable to and consequently of, our behaviour in that *prior* state, to a designation *here* (and here only absolutely) either to good or bad; to a much more easy, or hard allotment of penal sufferings for *the past*, and trial accordingly for *hereafter*; and therefore is it in a strict sense, rightly said to be passed upon us previous to our birth: At the same time, without prejudicing our hopes and expectations in a *future* one, arising from a greater care and circumspection "to walk humbly before God" in *this* life of final trial; and is indeed, an excellent excitement and motive thereto. See St. Paul's manner of reasoning on this amazing Topic, with the *Romans*, Ch. IX, X, XI. especially the 1st and 11th verse *et seq.* where he expressly informs us, that God's Choice and Election is made by *his own Will*, though in consistency with *his Mercy, Justice and Truth*, before we are born, having made this the rule thereof amongst his guilty creatures; and not afterwards, according to our works†—I think it is now then, fully proved to be an *Opinion* highly assisting and useful, to suppress our murmurs and complaints at the present state of things; to reconcile

† A. to this, see *Gen.* XXV. 23. *John* IX. 2, 3 *Gal.* I. 15. likewise *Jude* IV.—And will not this conception of the matter, justify the present translation of, 2 *Tim.* I. 9. *Tit.* I. 2?

us to the thought of God's moral government over us, thro' our entire existence; and effectually so, to silence the tedious altercations and cavils, at the wondrous constitution of Nature and complicated system of beings, we experience in this world; that God may be justified in his saying, and clear when he is judged! And indeed, I think, the greatest insufficiency of *this Supposition*, now pleaded for an allowance of, towards quite obviating and removing all these difficulties and embarrassments; and determining the great variety of opinions and sad contentions, that have hitherto distracted the Church through all ages; as well as philosophical disquisitions, concerning the nature of the human Soul: Is chiefly owing to its not being plainly *revealed* in Scripture, and therefore not positively to be *asserted* and entirely *concluded* upon—But this must be resolved, into the infinite pleasure and wisdom of the Almighty—

THAT the Sin of the least offending of all the lapsed Spirits may have been so vile, that a restitution on almost any *severe* terms, much more on the present *easy* ones, to an utterly forfeited, eternal, perfect state of Bliss and Glory; should make us look on the great miseries of this short life, as diminutive and momentary. This too gives one an exalted Idea of the Original perfection, spotless purity, and surpassing excellence, of all God's handy works, at their *primitive* Creation, and especially all Spiritual Beings, more immediately derived from Him, at their primeval production; and clears up all the doubts and difficulties in our attempts to account for the Fall of *Adam*, our great Parent; and of the Origin of evil, from one man's transgression derived on all his miserable posterity—For that this world is a place of real punishment, purposely fitted for affliction as well as moral document; every one's own experience, will be apt daily to admonish him: And how all Mankind (in any sense) could fall in *Adam*, and are thereby made obnoxious to the resentment due for his single transgression; cannot be otherwise so easily accounted for and justified, as by imagining an intercourse and combination amongst the Souls of Men, prior to this our present state; when the relation and union between them was much more intimate and indissoluble, than we can well conceive in our now broken, separated and distracted condition. But by conceiving, "*that by one Man, sin thus entered into the world, and death thereby*, it seems a little to illustrate *Rom. V. 12.*—(See Margin, and compare *Heb. VII. 9, 10.*)—But what or whence could be this so amazingly powerful

powerful and forcible *Mensruum*, the *Original Sin* strictly speaking, that excited this sad ferment and separation, till the precious Balsam of our dear Saviour's Blood, was poured out to allay it and consolidate all again, (some sooner and *perhaps* some later in the deep periods of an Eternity;) it may be very uncertain to conjecture about. Some act of *Pride* and *Falsehood* it seems to have been, in Satan himself at least: And we may be sure it was such, in them that did not exceed all possible room for *pity*, that kept within some degree of it, as yet necessitated the Almighty out of pure wisdom and goodness, to clothe, burden and load lapsed Spirits with earthly Bodies, as best adapted and fitted to their fall'n corrupted temper, condition and nature of their guilt: As the only method left, by which at once to *punish* for the past, and to *humble, prove* and repair them for the future: That we might "through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the Flesh," and so the more expeditiously, "be renewed in the spirit of our minds and "be again made *perfect* thro' sufferings;" and thus bring back that honour and glory to the blessed Creator, which we have basely robbed him of, that nothing be lost in the end. And accordingly we find *Pride*, the most predominant vice, so deeply rooted in the human temper, and still desperately tyrannizing over our fallen nature; by constantly exciting us to rebel and transgress against the holy, just and good commandment and law of God. This therefore seems to be a sin, of all others most likely an *original*, as it is plainly the greatest and most comprehensive of all we know of or can conceive, to which every other must be reduced, or is rather the fruitful source of them all. It therefore pleased God of his wisdom and mercy, to send his Son into the world to redeem the world; and there to reproach and vilify the senseless arrogance of the human heart, and afford us an illustrious pattern of the greatest condescension and pure angelick meekness, by his taking upon himself our degraded Nature amongst the lowest rank of men, and thereby restoring it to its native moral dignity and grandure, oh! how infinitely excelling, all that the superior orders and higher stations in the world, altogether, have so vainly to boast of, merely on account of their remotest lineal Ancientry and uninterrupted pompous Pedigree! For hence we easily and assuredly estimate, what is the most august honour and royal magnificence of proud Carnality, in this low and transitory condition of things: viz. perfect vanity and nothing worth; nay perfectly brutifying, without "the

"ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, the hidden man of the heart, which is in the sight of God of great price" indeed; and which alone can at last advance us, "to crowns of an exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—These we must confess, are perfectly humiliating sentiments; and yet at the same time, utterly deprive us of every possible reason for repining, or complaint. And in God's holy word and providence, we may find sufficient encouragement to raise the mind, superior to all the fears and terrors that this reflection may at first occasion, or can at last fix therein when maturely attended to. And a due sense of this matter viewed in the light here meekly offered, cannot fail to touch deeply the godlike passions and affections of every worthy Soul, and fill it with the most sincere resignation and unfeigned gratitude! And what violation is there then of God's Attributes, or the constitution and pious inclinations of men's Souls; in thus considering them as part of the *Fallen-Angels*? For I should be very sorry to persist in maintaining, or encouraging any opinion, that does in the least derogate from the honour of God, the excellency of his divine and holy Laws, or the glory of his Works—

BUT on the contrary, I think, this supposition of our *original Perfection* in native celestial regions, quite annihilates that main complaint of the want of it, urged against the present temporal system and constitution of things, in this state of nature. And over and above the just propriety there is, in God's arbitrary disposal of his own Creatures, as of old hath been rightly argued; *this demonstrates* every favour we now experience, to be the pure effect of his own essential *goodness* and *benignity*, is quite transcendent, since we by actual forfeiture, are absolutely estopped from every the least plea or pretence of right and title to them; and of consequence, most necessarily demands our reverential *fear* and *love* of Him, in an eminent degree: Entirely dissipates the charge "of absurdity, in the present method "of government by *punishments*, as an awkward, round-about method of carrying things on, nay, as contrary to "a principal purpose, for which it should be supposed "creatures were made, namely, *Happiness*:" And likewise, that we are not propelled by a divine impulse, or extraordinary extension of mercy, overbearing our wills, "always to do what is right and most conducive to happiness:" And thus reconciles us to an absolute *probationary* state, as now become needful and expedient, thro' God's grace,

grace, agreeably to this hypothesis—(see Dr. BUTLER's *Analogy* Introd. *passim*.) This for ought we can tell, was the particular, “wise and good Principle, which disposed the author of nature, to make different kinds and orders of creatures; disposed him also, to place creatures of like kinds, in different situations: And that the same principle which disposed him to make creatures of different moral capacities, disposed him also to place creatures of like moral capacities in different religious situations; and even the same creatures, in different periods of their *being*. And the account or reason of this, is also most probably the account, why the constitution of things is such, as that creatures of moral natures or capacities, for a considerable part of that duration in which they are living Agents, are not at all subjects of morality and religion; but grow up to be so, and grow up to be so more and more, gradually from childhood to mature age.” And in the next paragraph, he adds; “our *present* state may possibly be the consequence of somewhat *past*, which we are wholly ignorant of; as it has a reference to somewhat *to come*, of which we know scarce any more than is necessary for practice”—(see *ibid* Part II. Ch. VI.)—Possibly, the entire scheme of *Creation* in *The Beginning*, the eternal government of God over inferior moral Agents, if not over some of our degraded Superiors, and his good Providence extending over all his Creatures, and thus embracing the whole of his works of nature in Mercy, according to the present system, might hence take rise *in time*; and seems more probably founded on this modest supposition, of an astonishing defection from *original* and more godlike *perfectness*, through all ranks of beings, whilst in pure regions of his immediate bright presence, and thereby become exiles for a proportionate but short time, in this not disagreeable though earthly place of banishment, than in any other *necessary cause* yet discovered to the sons of men. And though it may transcend our present feeble reasoning powers, ever perfectly to reconcile these *seeming* inconsistencies with unerring Wisdom, and divine Goodness and Perfection; yet at the same time let me observe, that the permission of Evil and *abounding of Iniquity*, subserve the good purpose of being an infallible *Testimony of Jesus*, that he was full of the *Spirit of Prophecy*, as we learn from *Matt. XXIV. 12, 13.*—

Such and so great is the use of this doctrine, I have so faintly urged: And have so long dwelt upon, perhaps

in too prolix and tedious a manner, because it seems to me, (with all due submission to the good and learned,) to widen our comprehension of God's providence over us; and to be the most comfortable, consistent and adequate, to the much wished-for determination in these momentous and interesting concerns, connected with it, of any *hypothesis* I have as yet ever met with. We hereby seem to obtain a more satisfactory and approveable insight, into the present *divine* Dispensations and unerring rule of God's providence over us, than necessarily to ascribe them, to the mere arbitrary will and pleasure of God, as being the Author and Proprietor of all things and Disposer of all events. It is more just to resolve them, into our own actual demerits and absolute forfeiture. And this renders the *super-abounding Grace* of God to lost Creatures, very conspicuous, bright and glorious. *For he is righteous in all his ways; and his mercy is over all his works.* We can now no longer *reply against God*. All possible complaints must be silenced for ever. As this notion and view of present things, most clearly vindicates and eminently exalts his wisdom and equity and goodness, and this in a way, suited to a nearer conformity with our conceptions, understandings and feelings. And on the whole then of this supposition, there arises this very interesting reflection. That since it plainly appears from beginning to the end of Scripture, to be as St. Paul has informed us, *we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places*; what an open I say, is here, on the one side, for mercy to be extended to frail Mortality, and on the part of the poor sorrowful criminal, what grounds of joyous hope and expectation of it through the boundless mercy of our heavenly Father! And it even seems to throw a peculiar lustre, on the wonderful mystery and divine scheme of Redemption, when contemplated according to this very extensive system. And thus I humbly think, is not quite void of *internal Marks*, of its truth and genuineness. And if it appears no way prejudicial, in any respect I am not aware of; I hope my weak, but charitable endeavours herein, will be well received by all brother-Christians. But I will pray with the Psalmist, "Let not them that trust in Thee, "O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my cause, let not "those that seek Thee, be confounded through me, O "Lord God of Israel."—

THOUGH

THOUGH perhaps Mankind, were vastly short of being the most guilty part of the Apostate Spirits, yet to think they were in any measure so, in such a perfect state which they then enjoyed ; is affrighting to think of ! But as they might be of the lower degrees among those, at first, happy Beings, and therefore the most likely for Satan to have recourse to, as more easily to be prevailed with to enlist amongst his grand rebellious Troops ; it affords a small allay, in this sad reflection. And most probably, they can never be in the like danger any more, as the utter expulsion of this wicked Prince and the Chiefs of his Angels out of Heaven, continuing ; will be an ever-during remembrance of it, and an effectual caution for ever and ever, if we allow a *possibility* of lapsing *again* from that perfect state. But far above all, will the inscrutable Mystery of the Incarnation, Sufferings, and Death of the blessed Redeemer, and the glorious Exaltation of the Lamb of God to the Right-hand of The Father, be an everlasting *Memento* before our eyes, most perfectly to secure our eternal safety ; engage our endless thanksgiving and high applause ; and ever serve as a well-pleasing subject, worthy the inspection and search, deep into, of all the Hosts of Heaven ! (see *Rev. XXII. 3, 4, 5.*) And on the whole, from this view of the matter and consideration of the state of Grace, under our princely Redeemer and most potent Deliverer, there is the highest room to presume ; that such as shall “ be found faithful unto death, unblameable in holiness before “ God, at the coming of our Lord *Jesus Christ*,” will like Him, the Great *Example and Shadow of heavenly things*, be (as he was most expressly, as *revelation* teaches us to believe) *exalted*, to far higher seats of glory and bliss, at His *right-hand in the heavens*, than were those from which we have fallen, and as an actual reward for this perseverance in the good fight of Faith. Wherefore, (to use the suitable and very animating reasoning of the Author to the *Heb. XII. 1, 2.*) “ seeing we also are compassed about “ with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every “ weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let “ us run with *patience*, the race that is set before us, looking unto *Jesus*, the author and finisher of our faith ; who “ for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross despising the shame, and is set down at the right-hand of “ the throne of God.”—

Now then at last, to sum up my reflections on this head, I will extract from the *Rhapsody*, a sort of parallel the Author

thor has drawn in P. 40. between these supposed Confederates in rebellion. As he observes, " Their catastrophe seems connected with ours ; They are our Neighbours ; their Chief is the Prince of the Air ; and their intercourse with us, is too notorious ; their doom waits till we are ready, for they are reserved in everlasting Chains under darkness, unto the Judgment of the Great Day : Their Sentence too seems the same date with ours, for thus it runs—' Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed,' that is, for tempting *Eve*."—Such *scriptural* notices and accounts in concurrence with observation and experience, make the Thought appear perfectly natural ; I had almost said, irresistible—And there is certainly more than mere *human* frailty, in all the enormous atrocities and most desperate violations, we see perpetrated among men on the earth ; we cannot hesitate scarcely a moment, to pronounce this a taint of *Diabolism*.—And here I will beg leave to add—That by this new Light, in my opinion, the relation between, and the proper meaning and Objects of, those two very remarkable passages *Matt. XIX. 28, 29.* and *1 Cor. VI. 2, 3.* may be easily discovered ; and which seem to reflect strong rays upon the foregoing useful doctrine : And thus, that otherwise extremely difficult and wonderful piece of Information of the Apostle, will be explained, by the glorious Promise of his very generous Master, the Saviour of the World—And if the transgression of the Fall'n-Angels, was, as many learned men reasonably suppose, their refusing to submit to his own Son's sovereignty over them, according to the Almighty Father's appointed Hierarchy and subordinate estate of all Beings he hath created ; with what awe and dread does the thought of such worthless creatures as wicked mortals are, *still* refusing to " have the Man *Christ Jesus* to reign over them," unavoidably strike our minds ! And considered in especial respect to our blessed Saviour's parables delivered to the Jews, and their peculiar conduct, is there not a great similitude in the offences of the one and the other ? For Apostacy and Rebellion, are the grand Accusations against all wicked Angels and Men too : An universal conspiracy and combination amongst them, utterly to throw off his dominion and resist his good pleasure to govern them, by his own *Anointed Vicegerent* ! And the blessed Son of the Almighty Father, being the appointed restorer of Mankind and to triumph over the Devil, countenances the conceit of our pre-existence and this supposed Origin of Evil—The excellency

cellency of Man's obedience, and Satan's opprobrious disobedience—and that Satan is the peculiar and implacable enemy of Man here, and *Christ* the friend of souls; and therefore herein we find these two grand adversaries of each other, the Author of *Sin* and Taker of it away again, so expressly opposed—the history of *Adam's* lapse—the dispensations of Providence, peculiarly suited to beat down all aspiring thoughts, and narrowly limit all degrees of *Knowledge*, properly so called—and Humility being so directly opposed to Pride—the denial of our prayers, and being pent up under darkness and ignorance of *divine* things—All seems plainly to shew, *this*, no very wrong notion of these surprising and important matters. And the life of *Job*; and the remarkable contest between *Job* and his Friends, (see Mr. *Worthington* on ditto, in his ingenious *Essay on Man's Redemp.*) does it not rather seem, as if they alledged his wickedness and corrupt heart as the only *possible* cause of his afflictions, but that his insisting on his integrity *here*, most likely therefore implies, that he was secretly a fautor of the doctrine of a *prior* defection, in a more perfect state of divine knowledge and purity?—Here we have a copious subject for our meditation, in which are some parts that may, I hope, have the good effect to affright and alarm the Wicked, and to excite the greatest raptures of praise and adoration, in the Godly; for the victorious triumph of a merciful Saviour, of the latter, in whose dear purchase they will be happy, (thrice happy!) Sharers; and at the most tremendous disgrace and utter rejection, of the former: With Whom these will be most miserable partakers, is above hinted; and in What, is too dreadful to think and dwell upon, but that it is too absolutely requisite.

The End of the FIRST CHAPTER.

C H A P.



C H A P. II.

S E C T. I.

NOW I say, in my poor simple judgment, this species of Faith, seems to place these interesting matters, in the most advantageous and amiable point of view. It seems very assisting, to develop the most abstruse particulars recorded in Holy Writ; and some speculative points arising from its venerable and sacredly imposed silence, such as the creation of the human Soul, whether *ex traduce* or by infusion, are hereby more easily answered; and it serves well to throw a steady light on these obscure points in Religion, and bring such great mysteries nearer to our dim sighted apprehensions. But above all, it fills us with very exalted conceptions of the Supreme and Almighty Creator, who made all things at first immaculate and perfect; and in consideration of his own Honour and infinite Glory, is still, we see, deeply concerned for the reinstating of his handy works, in their original blissful condition and celestial order: And in repairing the sadly injured beauties of his Holy Temple, in our Hearts. In this our progressive revolution therefore, we are at last placed in this probation-state, after perhaps passing through many changes to arrive thereto; where the Blessed Redeemer of the world, hath been substituted as a sufficient propitiatory Sacrifice, for all that will accept Redemption through his Blood, "he being made a Curse for us: that the God and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, might gather together (again) in one, all things in *Christ*, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in him." Thus does God for ever "manifest his almighty power, most chiefly in shewing mercy and pity", to his lapsed feeble Creatures, in blessing them with the Grace of his Holy Spirit; and as far as is consistent with a dernier state of discipline and trial, curbing their implacable Enemies of the Deep. So that

that all who in the end shall be eternally *lost*, must ascribe it with most bitter and pungent remorse, entirely to their own odious and detestable inconsideration and perverse wills. "Then shall they not have any power at all to say any thing:" (*Numb. XXII. 38.*) "For what could have been done more to God's Vineyard, that he hath not done in it?" (*Isa. V. 4.*) This notion of things, does then seem to elevate the most glorious Attributes, of "The high and lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity!" such as his Goodness, Mercy and Power, to a proper super-eminent excellence (see *Isa. LVII. 15.*) and teach us highly to extol the boundless Love of The Son, in thus meekly dying for us; and greatly encreases our joyful amazement, when thus contemplating this immense Subject of our heavenly derived Pedigree, our descent, alliance and kindred, with the invisible World of Spirits and Powers around us; and strikes us with most humble impressions, and devout astonishment, and reverential Fear! It conduces most eminently, to promote the interest and cause of *virtue* in general; and to fix and fasten our adoring love and placid contemplations, incessantly upon so amiable and perfect an Object! For "to us there is but *one God, The Father*, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and *one Lord, Jesus Christ*, by whom are all things, and we by him: For we are all of *One*, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them Brethren"—(Compare *1 Cor. VIII. 6.* with *Heb. II. 11.*)—Thus is this curious disquisition, made a matter not of mere speculation, but replete with the highest certain advantages to our sense, feeling and conception of things; and by obviating many if not all, real difficulties, in the way to an easy and universal reconciliation and acquiescence under God's dispensing power, and every experience in Life, is productive of great abundance and rich fruit, unto faith, righteousness, holiness, thanksgiving, and praise; and an entire cordial love of God and for all his creatures—

AND now let me ask, with all reverence; may we not carry this thought still further than our *Rhapsodist* does, with wonderful advantage; and suppose *all*, at least *animated* Beings in the World, to be of the same Original, the genuine Offspring and fraternity of Heaven? But oh! then how sadly are the Mighty, debased and fallen. That God made all *beings* at first, in themselves quite complete and perfect, each in his species, rank and order, quite superior to this present lapsed condition, and without blemish or

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impurity,

impurity, is highly rational to suppose; when we consider the infinite perfections and immensity of that Being, the immaculate Fountain! From whom All Things did at first proceed and flow. For St. James assures us, "that every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning—Of his own will begat he us with the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of *First-fruits of his Creatures*: (Ch. 1. 17, 18.) This sure seems plainly intended to carry on the allusion, meant by the same expression we find in many parts of Scripture, between Christ and his Church, or between Him and Mankind; from Mankind, and so to the Creatures—This amazing and beauteous concatenation of life and being, in the three grand distinct orders and stages of it in this world, the Vegetable, Animal, and Rational, each additional link of this so vast a golden chain, still taking it up a little lower than where the preceding one has raised it to, and left it; is by this means in its numberless particular portions, the more imperceptibly combined together, and in the whole firmly united: And till at last, being thus fully perfected and accomplished in Him, by one easy and continual advancement; here being thus united to the Divine; it is extended from earth to heaven, and even up to the highest possible approximation to The Supreme. (See this thought and grand Idea, beautifully enlarged upon, *Spectator*, Numb. 519.)

AGAIN—This hint may serve much to illustrate, that position of St. *Paul's* to the *Romans*, Ch. VIII. and help us to understand it according to the express and emphatical import of the words: (see V. 19. to 25. inclusive) Where he hath so strongly connected, compared and enforced the doctrine of the expectation and hope of *The Creature*, with our own †, as I acknowledge, seems to me designed to inculcate, a literal interpretation of it—For we may conceive, that

† Including perhaps, the great Principle of life and motion in all *plastic* Nature, diffused thro' the whole arrangement of *beings* in their several ranks and orders, to preserve the settled œconomy of the creation. For My-thinks 'tis analogous to Nature, to imagine this chain of Life extended from *heaven*, tapering and diminishing as it were, thro' superior Spirits in bliss down to mortals, Man, Animal and Vegetable; and even quite to the *world* itself, as the bright Staple therein, by which the latter is linked to and dependent on, the former—"For God is able even of Stones, to raise up Children unto Abraham." This universal

that on the expulsion of these rebel Angels out of the bright regions, from amongst blessed and perfect Spirits, they were cast down to the darker abodes below, there to dwell pent up in bodies prepared for their reception, of materials, form and qualities, suited to their respective greater degree of turpitude: And till some, even whole *legions* of the Chiefs, who have run such inconceivable lengths in apostacy and sinful *accusations*, are left to undergo present misery in the airy Abyss, still in their spiritual but now gloomy forms, and superior faculties of volatility, foreknowledge and anticipation of final and dreaded torments; "having great wrath, because they know they have but a "short time." How then at last can we so well account, for this in some measure, seemingly destitute and forlorn state; the continual unavoidable failings, infirmities, and various helpless diseases of body and mind, we at present labour under in these earthly tabernacles of flesh and blood; or find so near a way to arrive at suitable satisfaction to our souls, in this very prolifick enquiry so sought and laboured after, both as to its physical and moral difficulties with which it is attended; as by the supposition, this comprehensive System, I have enlarged and commented upon? And this hath therefore emboldened me to lay before my pious Reader, the result of my long deliberation; heartily wishing him equal profit and pleasure, from the use of this sentiment; as a proper medium, thro' which sufficiently to discern the infinite perfections of the Supreme Being, and to excite our acquiescence under his wise government over the whole universe, with holy resignation and cheerfulness, filial love and divine complacency; it filling our hearts with ennobled prospects of, and exalted praises for, the vast *Inconceivables* laid up in store for an

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everlasting

versal Mundane Soul or Spirit, being as much the immediate Cause of gravitation and all motion in Body, and the fluidity of some particular kinds of it, as of vegetation and animal life and such like, in the rest—(P. 14. 15.) So that our bodily eyes, are continually feasted with the wholesome effect of God's real presence and exertion of *divine* energy, by every particle of matter; and more especially and positively yet in Animalcules, by the help of Microscopes; all witnessing his absolute "immensity, power and goodness over all his works," filling all space and pervading all body—(See *Parad. Lost*, B. V. 469.)

The notion of the transmigration of Souls therefore, if at all probable, to be, is in a reverse progress to the *Pythagorean* system: Not from Man downwards, but up to Man; as the last stage that can be attained to, in probation for eternity—

everlasting Futurity ; and for *all Things*, all the productions of his hands, to be meet partakers of at the final CONSUMMATION—(see *Col. I. 15—20.*)—Since it is not impossible, but that even the very meanest of the *animal Tribe*, being endued with a motive faculty and active real *life* ; may, (i. e. this Principle within it,) by passing thro' various refining, purifying and improving, forms, states and conditions, in this its temporal progress ; be capable at last, of tasting and partaking in the everlasting felicities of the other world—

THIS is surely then such a plan of things, as seems most highly to comport with the dignity, excellency and perfection, of the great Creator of Spirits : “ Who breathed “ into man the breath of *Life*, and he became a *living Soul* ;” absolutely immortal sure. How emphatical this ! So that the *destruction* of the Wicked, as interpreted by some of *late*, to mean annihilation, extermination from existence, or total extinction of *being*, seems not only inconsistent with the awful declaration of our blessed Saviour, assuring us that they “ shall go away into *everlasting punishment*,” (necessarily implying the existence of the Sufferer ; and when there is the greatest reason too to suppose, that the word *everlasting*, should be taken in the same limited sense it is used, in numberless other places,) but is in itself scarcely possible to be conceived ; nor is at all consistent, with our right conceptions of the *Almighty Father of the Universe*, who hath made nothing in vain, nor can his operations, or “ designs be eternally frustrated, “ by finite impotence, folly, and malice.” There is an unbounded difference between *destroying for ever*, and *preserving for ever*, the souls of the Wicked in torments. There is a mean, which I should rather imagine, the true doctrine in this disputed case, *viz.* That after an *everlasting* (to our poor ideas) period and duration in misery, in the vast revolution of lapsed spirits, the whole Work of God may finally be renovated to perfection, bliss and glory. This therefore wonderfully enlarges our comprehension, of the immensity of the *One everlasting Father of All*, to a boundless extent ; and fills us with as ennobled ideas of his goodness and mercy, as our present nature is capable of—But there still remains another insuperable objection to this *destruction-doctrine*, under the notion of *punishment*, and which is clearly obviated by the foregoing supposition—Which is this : That *all Sinners*, be their crimes ever so unequal, will at last be equally *punished*, and no suitable distinction

distinction can be made—But as all the sense and understanding of Man, can never make this to be a *Actual* Punishment, so neither can I therefore believe it to be the import, of that tremendous sentence on the wicked.

FINALLY, Hence seem we to derive further light and illustration, as to the nature, reason and design of *vicarious Sacrifices*; and easily see a propriety in substituting some, selected out of the *brutal* kinds for Propitiation, and to be offered up by the hands of rebellious and wicked Mankind; (as a lesson of very unavoidably affecting admonition) and dedicating these few in the name and place of the whole, utterly lost, to a thoroughly injured and incensed Deity: And therefore necessarily fitted and adapted in themselves, for pre-ordinate types of that *One* all-sufficient *Sacrifice*, and only acceptable Oblation in His sight, which in the fulness of time was to atone for the offence of the whole world, and procure The Father's *reconciliation* to *all his Creatures* in it. This is a rational account then of the origin of this Law and Institution, as an easy means and in small measure, to pay off the great Debt of *Blood*, in which is the *Life* now forfeited; and most probably therefore, immediately stipulated for on *Adam's* lapse—And when it pleased God after the Flood, to allot animal food †, yet still by an awfully repeated and most solemn Injunction, did he take especial care to lay full and positive claim to this heavy debt, by strictly commanding the blood and life to be entirely separated and devoted to himself, as doubly his own by his *gift* and our *forfeiture*; until *The Lamb* thus in a figure “slain from the foundation of the world,” should pour out his *own blood and life* to redeem us and purchase ours, and which perfectly cancelled and made void, not only these particular parts of, but all the ceremonial Law together, the Command of *sacrifice* and Injunction of *life* as to the Brutes, both being founded on the same principle, *viz.* a general attaint of *blood*—But these matters of such importance, on any *other* supposition are very difficultly, if at all, cleared of absurdity, inconsistency, and even cruelty too: When in *this* view, we plainly see bountifully displayed, the infinite goodness and wisdom and all other attributes

† Amongst other wise reasons, particularly to *bungle* Man; thro' a sense of the near relation and dependence between, nay really the absolute sameness in, the bodily (at least) substance of both, and a possibility therefore of eating what may have been his own flesh—And as it has been a means, of shortening our Life—

attributes of the Creator ; and even a peculiar justness and fitness in these enjoined rites and sacred reservations—For why else should the most harmless, familiar, and useful species of the inferior part of our common fleshly nature, be destined to this sacred purpose of peculiar sacrifice, and the important one for food, with a constant, punctual and peculiar reservation of the *Life* ; but chiefly, that as both Man and Beast have been originally joint companions in Apostacy, so should each jointly bear a proportion and both act their subordinate parts, in this mysterious universal scheme of humiliation, atonement and redemption, by the shedding of *blood* and resigning up the *life* again, and not only as of necessity but willingly in tryal of man's obedience and virtue—That the life of Brutes should expiate for Human sins, hath been a long and strong Objection to the cause of true Religion ; but I hope it helps to take off the weight in some considerable degree, by being in *this* manner well accounted for, and set in a clear light for every willing Enquirer to judge of—This thought and apprehension of things therefore, gives a preference and great magnificence to this the choicest half of our duty, of *praise* and *thanksgiving* ; (even in this life of misery and wants and ignorance, over that of the other more servile and ignoble half, *viz. prayer*, which will bear no part in the exercises of the heavenly state ;) is a plenteous fountain of supply, to promote the true and worthy performance of it ; and wonderfully enlarges the blessed Object, in our scanty and feeble ideas, to whom it's so justly owing by us—And after all that hath been said in private converse, the variety of sentiments and opinions produced by friendly conferences, and in piles of volumes written, thro' all the long successive generation of philosophers both moral and divine, in relation to this interesting Subject, and its numberless branches and dependences ; I think, I may safely presume to say, its difficulties are by no means removed, one's doubts are yet as just and nearly as great, as ever they were—What thanks then are not due, how much doth the world owe, to this our unknown worthy Author ? Who thus, like a *Newton* on Comets, hath likewise in this the same happy period of time, first clearly discovered the sacred laws, whereby these *more strange* appearances are regulated ; an ingenious hypothesis, complete and sublime system, to account for these perplexing and alarming Phenomena in the moral world, which have hitherto eluded the most curious elaborate and unremitted search, of ignorant and short-sighted mortals,

mortals, and hath now *brought to light the hidden things of darkness*. And these plain and inestimable uses therefore, which I have gladly endeavoured to draw from this happy thought, cannot fail to serve for apology allowable and sufficient, for such tedious minuteness and verbosity, with a friendly design to make it more *attended to*, as an entirely *new doctrine*, or is become so (at least) thro' the want of it: *Et valeat, quantum valere potest*. And now will conclude with congratulating my Brethren in Christ, in the full enjoyment of so very excellent a *Panacea*, capable of healing all the repinings, murmurs, and complicated complaints of our souls; and to win and secure the exceeding love of all the Pious, to the Almighty Father of Spirits, from henceforth and for evermore: But yet, *rather Blessed are they that have not seen (or understood) and yet have believed; which hear the Word of God, and keep it—*

Now in consistency with this Hypothesis, I cannot but think, that every thing we experience in Nature and every thing we see taught us in Scripture, becomes presently intelligible and sufficiently obvious. The familiarity and intercommunion between infernal and human Spirits, which Revelation tells us has subsisted from our First Parents till our Saviour's coming at least, is by this easily accounted for. But how this strange correspondence could *ever* once commence; and accordingly the relation of our first Parents being placed in Paradise is directly followed by that of their fall; that *any* access to them by Evil Spirits should be immediately permitted, and the woful effects of their actual possession so soon demonstrated, and this new Creation for Mankind so soon be turned into a principal habitation for Devils, and Earth become so like a Hell; this, I say, seems to me, without this supposition utterly impossible. But with it, all is reduced within the extent of our present Understandings and seems truly natural. What necessity for subtrefuges, subtlety and Sophistry, thro' the *uncertainty* of Language, to reconcile many of the most important Truths of Scripture with plain sense and intelligence, and thereby endanger the truth of the whole; nor need we be in any pain to save harmless and unimpeached the Wisdom, Mercy and Goodness of our heavenly Father? Away then with all such over-much refined Hyper-criticism, on such plain narratives of Fact as are those of the Gospels especially, by which words are forceably perverted from their pure, simple and positive meaning, to the great
prejudice

prejudice and even destruction of the credit of all History profane and sacred, the rendering very precarious every divine Truth, and shaking our most holy Faith to its lowest foundations—And are not these unavoidable consequences, of denying real *possession* in the case of the *Demoniacks*? For do not the very high Antiquity of this notion, its universal prevalence, (inasmuch that the belief in Magic and Sorcery, we find, is almost natural to the weak and uncultivated mind of man;) our Saviour's openly countenancing of it, (which had it not been really so, must have vastly injured his character, being a matter of the greatest consequence) and these being the visible *works and power of the Devil* he was purposely manifested to destroy, the consistency of this established Opinion with the whole body of sacred History, from their entrance into Man till cast into the Swine by a *Legion* together *—the firm belief of the matter recorded *Acts* IIId. Ch. All this, I say, plainly depends on a literal construction and meaning, of the relation we here have of these surprizing affairs. For I am sure we have no more reason to credit the truth of this last affair, or any thing of the like kind since, than of the first, from inward or outward feelings. I think I may venture to affirm, from both the complaints of the Good and practice of the Bad, that the real mischiefs of Evil Spirits are more evident and indubitable, than the actual blessings of the Holy one: That the indwelling of the latter, is more to be questioned

* That the affair of the *Gergesenes* (*Matth.* VIII, 28.) and parallel places,) is utterly inexplicable; without admitting the plain narrated *fact*, I will beg leave just to propose the few following Questions to shew—What could cause the *Swine* (of all animals the most obstinate, even to a Proverb) to run frantick, and directly fling themselves headlong off the top of a precipice, into destruction? Or did these unhappy Men, only *two*, drive a whole *herd*, thus easily, and instantly; and in opposition, to their probably *many* Tenders? This is too plainly absurd to gain belief. And pray if so, was it done before or after their Cure? For if any *Demoniacks* we have account of, were mad, surely these were, *before*; and if *after*, the attempt was a strange symptom of a Cure—But further it is vastly dangerous to say, that none but *Madmen* were thoroughly persuaded of his being *The Christ*: And yet no less, almost, is asserted by some Objectors. For then it is well if it is not replied, that none but *Madmen* would worship him, as such—But it certainly is not more credible that they should confess him, than *Evil Spirits* should, who are said to *believe and tremble*. Nor can our Saviour's form of language and behaviour, on these occasions; or the Evangelists when under the guidance of The Spirit of Truth; be justified any other way? Imposition and delusion in every degree, are impossible—

questioned than of the former—And *How* this is accountable for; *Why* permitted at first, if perfect Strangers to each other from all past eternity; is not any way else, I humbly presume, very possible to imagine — (see † P. 38.) But daily experience *demonstrates*, that both good and bad Spirits can operate upon the human mind. And numberless peculiar instances and particular junctures, seem to evince too, that our spirits have a power of extension beyond their mortal enclosures, and are not always perfectly bound up in flesh: But that there manifestly subsists an intercourse and contact between distinct souls, which we are not conscious of, previous to the exertion and consent of the Will.—

S E C T. II.

THE general method and tenour of God's visible dealings thro' out the World, from the Fall, and the rising scheme of his continual Dispensations with his Creatures, seems loudly to proclaim a Renovation and Restitution of what preceded it, whilst in the state of universal Innocency, harmony and love: The language of the Prophets and entire Scripture is very conform to it, and even Nature herself seems as hasting thereto apace, to administer to the general felicity and mutual transport—This apprehension and expectation of things, will explain this obscure passage of *St. Paul*, I say, to be literally meant of the restoration of *the Creature*, to its original and primæval condition and faculty, but much improved, in an earthly paradise as at the first—

For that the animal creation and ranks of irrational Beings, at least, are capable of a future state of existence; is in the highest degree probable, from what we experimentally find many of them subjected to, even in this present state of Nature. The present successive different states of some of the species of Insects, is I know, generally brought as a strong presumption, of the Immortality of the rational Human Soul; but sure then must be allowed, to be a much more immediate presumptive proof, of their own capacity of it. The Soul of the Insects future existence, is more directly and strongly prefigured by this change of its outward Vehicle, than that of the human Soul; if this change of Body will prove any thing in relation to the Soul, as to this—That they are capable of assuming Bodies of quite different forms and more improved powers,

powers, (and certainly more enlarged and excellent mental faculties as well) is already visible to us; and if possible in this present state, why not highly probable they may be made liable to this improving change, in a future one?

Why may not this approach towards perfection, begun Here, continue as a natural law and privilege, permanent and lasting in an Hereafter?—When used as an argument in respect to *our* Immortality, it is to be taken only from Analogy, it being no direct proof of it; but therefore it must have much of Reality, when applied to its *own* proper subjects, in proof of *their* continuance in *being*, certainly—

Again, that every particular Being in the whole Animal Creation, is constantly changing its bodily substance, and doth not depart hence with the same individual flesh and blood, with which it came into the world, is undeniable; that therefore all are made capable of taking up quite different Bodies in *substance*, is a plain fact: And God hath thought fit in the inferior Tribes, to afford us variety of plain instances in nature, of the like capacity of all altering their outward Vehicles in *form* too; and tho' one instance of this sort were surely enough, especially in a lower rank of Creatures, to convince us of the possibility of it in the much higher; of a change of the Body of all the different ranks of Beings, both in the substance and the form, of both the higher and the lower ranks, thro' the entire scale of Beings—And St. *Peter* hath assured us, the material and inanimate part of the Creation will be so; and an instance of the possibility of a Resurrection of the Body, we see in the sleeping kinds, as Swallows, &c.—And thus, I think, the point is fully proved as to the *whole Creature*: That the whole Animal World, in the fullest sense of it, shall be exalted to a more excellent condition, and renewed in futurity; as well as there shall be *new Heavens* and a *new Earth* (q)—That God doth not overlook this part of his handy works, with any sort or degree of negligence

(s) The Author hath elsewhere, endeavoured to render it highly probable, that as all that dwell upon the Earth, are in an endless progress towards perfection, so will their habitation itself likewise, be advancing with them—(See Note † p. 58.

“By due Gradation, Nature's sacred law.”

From a cursed black, *Tartarean* globe, till it becomes a most glorious orb of perfect Light—

“Nature delights in Progress; in advance

“From Worse to Better”——

Night Thoughts, p. 263.

negligence or indifference, but rather hath continual regard to the meanest kinds of his Creatures, mixt with great compassion and tenderness; is to be gathered from *Matt. X. 29.* which tells us, that without his cognizance and permission, not a little worthless sparrow falls. He directs every fatal shot, or pellet, where to strike with death; the destroying Angel when to spare; as is plain in the case of *Nineveh*, one chief motive to which was "there being much cattle"—Behold the days come, saith the Lord, "that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah, with the seed of Man, and with the seed of Beast. And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build and to plant, saith the Lord"—(*Jerem. XXXI. 27, 28.*) And the royal Psalmist seems plainly to allude to this obscure subject, in these words; "when thou lettest thy breath go forth, they shall be made; and thou shalt renew the face of the Earth." (*Pf. CIV. 30.*) "And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: And I will break the bow and the sword, and the battle out of the earth, and I will make them to lie down safely." (*Hos. II. 18.*)

AND if this be so in a real sense, as here pleaded for, with what deliberation and tender care, ought all men to exert their superiority and power, here committed to them over the Creature, the poor Brutes? But what deplorable spectacles, evincing the entire disregard and contempt of this rational duty, do we constantly behold? "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." (*Prov. XII. 10.*) As for instance, towards the poor dumb and helpless wretch (the most unhappy sure of all others!) the Horse, and withal the most beautiful and very beneficial amongst them; that is here doom'd to do the worst drudgery for mankind: Which tho' striving with all his might, yet is urged on by continual undeserved cutting and flashing with Whips, and tearing and gagging of Spurs, to perform the unreasonable task sometimes, (and too frequently God knows!) required of him, by his *inhuman* Master: And sometimes sweating and groaning in the bitterest torture and convulsive agonies, under the merciless hand of the stony-hearted and unfeeling *Farrier*—And tho' he be so very able to requite deservedly

deservedly such barbarous treatment, yet is he now restrained thro' ignorance, from so much as lifting up his heel against his present Lord, with any such intent. Or if the exquisite pain and torment, he this "steady tyrant Man!" cannot but see he often, (and sometimes even to gratify his own lawless, silly fancy and pleasure, and in compliance with ridiculous and absurd customs,) puts the sadly abused creature to ;

"Who with the thoughtless insolence of power,

"—— joys at anguish and delights in blood ;

"(the) falsely cheerful, barbarous game of death,

"This rage of pleasure ;" (according to the rich stile of *Thomson's* masterly pencil—*Autumn*)—does utterly fail to touch him with the least pity, at what Flesh and Blood like his own, is made thus to endure by his hands ; one can have but little hopes, I sadly fear, that the knowledge that these violences and cruel affronts offered to God, in these poor unjust sufferers, may one day rise up in judgment against them, will work to much good effect at present. Uncertain conjectures of such dreadful import to the lusts and prevailing fashions of this world, tho' ever so reasonable, about matters at such a remove from us as the great Day of Accounts is generally imagined, or at least willingly hoped, to be ; cannot be expected to operate strongly on the right affections. Fear on men's minds, looses most of its *momentum* and impulse, thro' such a fancied and præ-supposed space and distance. It will not avail but seldom to influence us, even in things much more nearly affecting our own daily right conduct and deportment. But tho' such impediments do arise, to defeat all hopes of success intended by this Admonition, yet was it not altogether improper, to take this favourable opportunity of introducing and inculcating it—(See *The Guardian*, Numb. 61.) "O Lord ! Thy righteousness is like the great mountains ; thy judgments are a great deep ! O Lord ! Thou pre-servest *Man* and *Beast*. How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God ! therefore the children of men, put their trust under the shadow of thy wings"—(*Psal.* XXXVI. 6, 7.)



F I N I S.

